



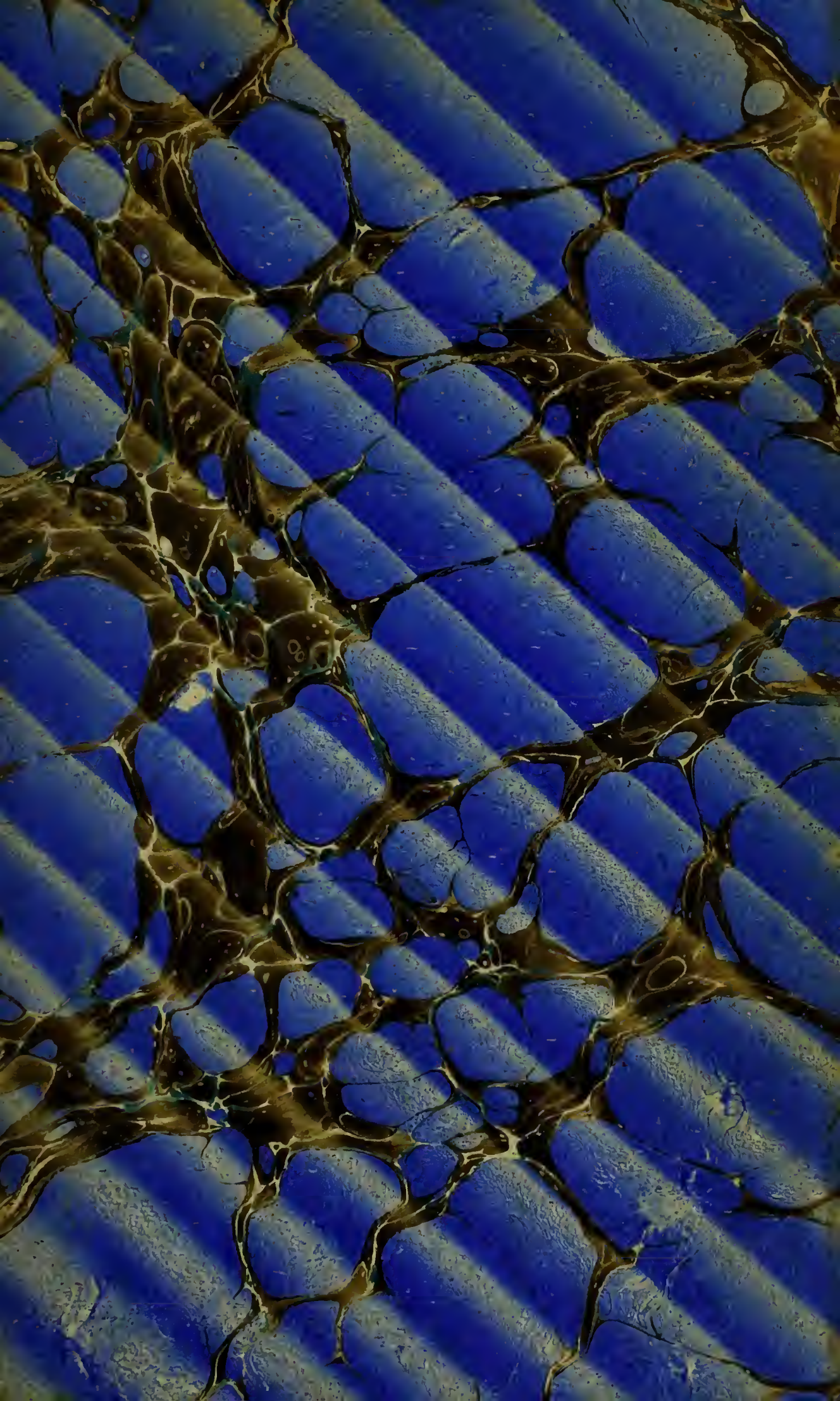




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ADVENTURES  
OF  
A MEDICAL STUDENT.

BY  
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WITH  
A MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ADVENTURES  
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CHAPTER XVI.

MARIANNE ESTERLING, CONTINUED.

ABOUT forty miles from the city of our tale, a strait divides a low and very beautiful isle from the mainland. In this isle is a wide bay, which is completely landlocked, and peaceful as a pond. Opposite to it, a tongue of land shoots out flat and level for about half a mile from the abrupt hilly range of coast. The usual shore-road runs round close under the hills, so that this little peninsula is quite out of the way and untrodden. It is covered with furze, bramble, wild rose, and other bushes, with patches of open green-sward here and there, and toward the outer point a small, steep, rocky hill rises, shaggy with dwarf oaks

and other low trees. On the southern side of this, again, two large old oak-trees grow, and between them, but nearer to one than to the other, has been erected a small Gothic villa, with a garden of about a couple of acres in extent attached. This was built by the owner of the land, as a speculation, and offered to be let at the rent of forty pounds a-year. Here Basil took up his residence with his bride, about the middle of spring. He had it furnished according to his own fancy, and had removed to it his books, instruments, and all his other movable property. He earnestly entreated Mrs. Esterling that she would cease her occupation, and for the future make her home with them. He insisted much upon this, but she was inflexible—she would remain and live in her old way, in which she was sure to be the happiest, and never, so long as she could earn her living honourably, would become dependent on any one. With this he was forced to remain contented for the time.

Than this home of their adoption no spot could be more beautiful or sequestered. With the exception of a couple of servants, no one but themselves came near the cottage, and days often would pass without any person being seen on the road that wound alongside



under the high land to the rear. At the bottom of the bay in the island opposite was a sunny little town—a thriving place for the coasting and fishing trade; and numerous sloops, and small vessels of other descriptions, were continually gliding about over the glassy waters of the strait.

And here they dwelt together in nearly perfect delight. They were continually with each other; one of them was never to be seen alone, and they were always cheerful and gladsome, happiness beaming in their countenances. Young as they were, they both possessed the peculiarity of appearing to the eye much younger. Marianne seemed a mere girl, while he might have been deemed a sedately-disposed lad of sixteen, or thereabouts; and any one who met them, as they rode out joyously together along the neighbouring roads, might have considered them brother and sister, the children of some gentleman in the vicinity.

But they did not confine themselves to this spot alone; all the neighbouring places worthy of remark they visited, and made frequent trips together to the city (to which, from the little town opposite, there was a rapid steam-conveyance), to purchase new books,

view picture-exhibitions, or see some distinguished London actor, who might haply be down there on a summer starring expedition.

And thus they passed the spring, summer, and autumn seasons, which that year were unusually warm and pleasant. But as the days began to grow shorter, Marianne expressed a wish to spend the winter on the continent, and Basil forthwith left for England, to make arrangements for the transmission of money. This was the first time since their marriage that they had been separated more than a day, and, though he was not to be beyond a week absent, their parting had in its tenderness something ominous. She accompanied him as far as the city, where, at her mother's house, she proposed to stay till his return, for the cottage, she said, without him, would seem so desolate and homeless.

On his arrival at his native town, he hurried his business over, eager to return to her with whom he had left all his joy. This done, he posted back with the most anxious speed, and arrived a couple of days sooner than he was expected. On dismounting from the coach, he immediately hastened to her mother's house, picturing the warm delight that waited his

coming, and thinking in what manner he should pass with her the after-part of the day.

As he entered the lonely street that held the scene of so much former happiness, he met Mrs. Esterling's servant-girl going upon some household errand. Stopping her with a number of eager questions to which she had not time to reply, he snatched from her hand the door-key, and speeded along. Entering the house, he went almost unconsciously, by the force of old habit, towards that apartment which had once been his study. Its door stood a little open, and his attention was immediately arrested by voices within, speaking in tones of deep and earnest feeling.

"And you are happy with him then—you have nothing further to wish for?"

"Nothing—oh, nothing!"

He knew the voice—it was hers. Gracious Providence! what is this?

"Well, then, I shall leave you to him for good. I believe he is all that he should be. Nay, don't give way so, dearest girl."

Basil pushed open the door—there before him stood Warkworth. Clinging to this man, with her arms round his neck, and looking up into his face with eyes bathed



in tears, was his Marianne, *his wife* ! Warkworth held her face between his hands, and, gazing into it with a look of much fondness, stooped over her and kissed her lips once and again.

As Basil saw this, his breath, which for a moment had been stifled by excess of emotion, found vent in a short, inarticulate, bursting scream. Their attention was drawn on the instant. Warkworth started, and hastily planted his foot behind, as if he would have fallen back. She suddenly dashed her open palm upon her forehead.

“Basil—my own Basil—my husband !” she screamed, “hear me !—Merciful Heaven !”

He was gone—out of the house he sprang, and rushed along the street, hatless, dishevelled, white as a corpse. An hour after that he was miles from the city, unknowing and uncaring about the direction or destination of the vehicle in which he was borne along ; his whole thought being to flee from the place where “a dagger of the mind” had been struck into him.

Late in the evening he arrived at Edinburgh, and, as he wandered alone through the moonlit streets and squares of that romantic city, the tumult of his thoughts subsided, and he was enabled to reflect

calmly and methodically upon the whole series of events.

“What a fortune is mine!” said he. “I have given myself wholly to the pursuit of pleasure, and, though it was of the intellectual kind, does that detract from the folly? I have shunned society, and am as a stranger in the world. I have allowed myself to become the slave of a passion, whose power and predominance in my mind at this moment, in spite of all that might naturally tend to quench it, strikes me with wonder. I have made myself familiar with those who were first introduced to me as, in a manner, my servants. I have married beneath my station, and allied myself to poverty (but that is nothing), to duplicity, treachery, dishonour, crime, infamy. My object was happiness, and I have found misery—misery—mental pain—agony of spirit. I formed ideas of such a thing once, in my imagination, for the purposes of poetical amusement. But now the experiment is made, and I know, though I never can express, the dread reality.

“My father was wrong to leave me master of myself, as he did, without any one to advise me possessed of sufficient experience of this wicked world. And I was surely infatuated, to act as I did. It is

done, however, now, and my heart is withered ; henceforth I shall be a man without feeling. I shall never love again, never feel joy or sorrow—the only thing that remains for me now is to die. It would be impious to seek death, but I shall await its finding me as I best can, and only hope it will not be long in coming.”

His first thoughts had been all of vengeance. He would call this hated Warkworth to account, and make him expiate with his blood the misery he had inflicted. From such ideas he now revolted—many were the reasons. In the first place, there was the fence of religion to be overleaped—that fence within which he had hitherto walked with scrupulous fidelity ; moreover, there was to be procured some friend sufficiently devoted to his interests to embroil himself on his account in proceedings of a mortal nature—and where was he to find such a one ? Again, there were the negotiations and investigations that must precede and follow such a measure, and, most hateful of all, the publicity that would be ensured. His shame and dishonour were now known to not more than three individuals, the interest of all of whom it was to keep their secret.



His final determination was to leave England for ever—never to hold any communication with *her*, or allow the possibility of any from her reaching him—to be for all future time dead to her and to his home. But we should be wrong to say this was his unaltered resolution—we should, for still his undiminished love drew him towards her with a fascination that, but for its new antagonist emotion, pride, would have been irresistible; and there were times—as when he was alone in the silence of night—at which he could entertain the thought of returning to her the runaway slave of passion, and submitting to forgiving all his injuries, provided she would but make him happy with the heaven of her love. He could take her away, he thought, from all the scenes of her sin, to some far country where no Warkworth could come near her to beguile her—where she could be kept from evil, if not by her own virtue, at least by want of temptation and opportunity—where she must be good by necessity, as she was lovable by nature. Nay, he would build up in his mind visions of future happiness, and form long schemes of moral guidance and instruction, whereby to win her to the paths of penitence and virtue, and make her look back with horror to her errors, and

bear new and grateful love to him whose constant affection, long sufferance, and piety, had reclaimed her.

But with reflection came again pride, and scorn of himself for having entertained, for a moment, such ignominious ideas; but aye love kept its ground, though assuming for that purpose the semblance of pity. Thus, while he had strength of mind, he daily increased his distance from her. Indeed, it was his intention to wander out the rest of his life in foreign countries, in order that they might be completely lost sight of by each other, and that he might lose the habit of pining after her presence.

But here the thought arose, "Should he leave her unprovided for?" And Love arose under the form of Pity again.

"What! shall I give that dearest, though false and lost one, cause to hate me—to wish she had never known me? I mean, shall I leave her penniless—a burden to him who has tempted her, perhaps a despised slave to him when she may have ceased her guilty love? Poor thing! what can she do to struggle with necessity? I bound myself to her for better or worse, and, though it has wofully turned out the latter,

shall I break that faith to her now which it would have been no merit in me to have kept in the former alternative?" (Then Love took the form of Honour.) "But again, in such a case, might she not be persuaded to prosecute, and my whole agony be thus raked up before the public eye?"—(Love again, simulating Caution!) "Nay, I will make arrangements to settle on her for life half my income, such as it is; I can live with every comfort on the rest. I shall never more have need of it; and it is but charity to give so freely to one who has so deeply injured me"—not charity, but *love*!

And this course he did follow. Through his agent, a man in whom he could put every confidence, he managed to arrange the regular future transmission of sums, the receipt of which should be notified through advertisement in a newspaper. And this was totally to shut out from her any possibility of writing or finding her way to him.

Before he left England he wrote her a farewell letter. It was very long—for it formed the last opportunity he could have of holding communication with her. Yet it contained nothing of upbraiding, but much of sorrow, and much of earnest advice; while

through it all, fervid and passionate, though sorely crushed, affection shed its vivid tinting.

This done, he bade farewell to his country, and wandered abroad, companionless and spiritless, for years. His precise place of sojourn was known to no one save his agents.

At length, when he had been more than ten years an exile, and gray hairs began to mingle with the brown, he received from these men information that his property in England had become so deteriorated, that they could not undertake to transmit him his usual supplies. Moreover, that his fund of uninvested money was now nearly exhausted.

Upon receiving this information he immediately hurried home. On his arrival in England he found that a company of trading chemists had purchased ground close to his own, and established upon it a very extensive manufactory of acids, bleaching powder, &c., the vapours of which were not only injurious to vegetation, but so unpleasant, and even prejudicial to health, that the houses from the annual rent of which his income was drawn could with difficulty be let at half their former rental. He learned, too, that the receipt of that money he had set apart for her, con-



tinued from time to time to be acknowledged, and that no attempt to communicate with him, at least through his agents, had been made by her. She was, evidently, still living, and, unless he chose to re-assume the whole or part of this her allowance, he found he must fall upon some means of supporting himself in the world by his own exertions—further residence abroad being now out of the question.

This course he resolved to adopt, but found no little difficulty in discovering how to render his talents and multifarious, but vague and ill-assorted, knowledge, available to the end. It appeared to him, at length, that teaching—the imparting to others the information he himself had accumulated—was the readiest, indeed the only immediate means.

It happened most opportunely that a situation of this description offered itself. A clergyman, of his own tenets of religious dissent, had been for many years in the habit of entertaining youthful boarders, the sons of people of his sect, and educating them according to the principles of its peculiar doctrines. This gentleman was now getting much advanced in age, and, on being applied to by May's agent, who informed him of his family, education, and character, readily agreed

to accept him as assistant in his educational pursuits. He had been well acquainted with his father, having studied with him in his youth, and was consequently disposed to receive and entertain Basil more on the footing of a friend than of a mere hired usher.

In this situation it was then the latter's intention to remain until he could obtain from the chemists, either by law proceedings or by amicable arrangement, compensation for the damage occasioned by them, or until he could fall upon some employment less harassing or more congenial to his taste. What he chiefly desired was a situation of a literary nature, in connexion with a newspaper or a periodical publication of some sort.

On waiting on the Rev. Mr. Elderley, who was for the future to be his employer, he was received with much affability. The house in which he was to take up his abode stood in the country, about two miles from a very large commercial town in the West of England, and was placed in an exceedingly fertile and beautiful rural district.

As they sat together after dinner on the day of his arrival, Mr. Elderley began to call up a number of recollections of his youth, when the elder Mr. May

and he had been fellow-students together, and used to strive for honours. They had both been candidates, too, for the hand of that lady who afterwards became the mother of his present guest.

“After their marriage,” continued he, “we became estranged, and I never afterwards heard from him; nor did I ever meet one of that name even till a few weeks ago, when a young pupil called May joined me. This set me thinking back, and I recollected your father had a brother.”

“Yes,” said Basil, “he had one who went out a missionary to South America. In the course, however, of the revolutionary struggles there, he ceased his calling, entered into trade, and, when we last heard of him, had become wealthy and influential.”

“Well,” said the other, “would it not be strange now if this boy should turn out a son of this uncle of yours, who may have returned to England possessed of wealth sufficient to put you in the way of once more becoming independent?”

“I am afraid the idea is a very visionary one, sir. Besides, if it were the case, it would give me no pleasure to renew the relationship. I am a sort of solitary being, and an extensive connexion would be

more painful to me than you could imagine. Moreover, to come before a relation whom I never saw, and who probably is ignorant of my existence—who, in addition, may have connexions wide enough and troublesome enough of his own—to come to such a one in the character of a suppliant—a dependent—is a thing I could not do on any motive or consideration.”

“ Well, I think you are right, Mr. May, for this boy has nothing of your family features ; indeed, he is quite different, being an exceedingly good-looking little fellow—a perfect juvenile Antinous.”

Here Basil blushed scarlet as he heard his personal appearance alluded to, though evidently without intention ; and when he saw his host's daughter, a very beautiful young lady, regard him attentively, he wished in his heart he had never sought his present situation. The worthy clergyman, however, seeing the effect of his observation, proceeded to pour balm into the wound he had made, and continued :—

“ He is also quite different from both your father and yourself, in the fact that, though certainly a stirring boy at all sorts of games, he is, intellectually speaking, but a dunce, though it appears to depend



more on obstinacy than lack of capacity—at all events, the cane can do little for him.”

“I am not a great believer,” said Basil, “in the efficacy of that instrument of instruction under any circumstances: I am inclined to put more faith in kindness, attention, and example. Conciliation, in my opinion, is, in most cases, preferable to coercion.”

“Well, I shall be overjoyed to see the good effect of your system. I believe there are great changes now in the views the public entertain on the matter and manner of education, and little Gerald is as good a subject as any for experiment.”

“Gerald! Is that his name?”

“Yes, Gerald Maye—they spell it with an ‘e’ final.”

“Oh, I see; he is one of the south-country Mayes. He comes from the south of England, does he not?”

“Yes; from some place in Hampshire I believe the letters with regard to him were dated.”

“Yes, there are, I have been told, a good many of the name in that quarter, and they all spell it in that way. They are quite a different race from we of the north, and are of French descent, I should surmise.

We never put the 'e' to our May, which is of good Westmoreland Saxon."

They then went on to talk of the other pupils, the master giving an account of their characters in order that he might the better undertake their management.

It was by the above conversation that Basil's attention was drawn particularly to the boy in question, and more by the agreement of Mr. Elderley that he was to be put entirely under his charge, and not punished with the rod, unless some flagrant offence should call for his own interference.

He found him to be of a character and disposition closely allied to his own—so nearly identical, that, if placed in circumstances the same as his own in early life, he felt convinced he would have followed a career exactly parallel. His whole mind seemed made up of emotions as nearly approaching the intensity of passions as they could in the heart of a child. He displayed the same strong feelings—the same ardent attachment—the same deep dislike, even hatred—the same excitability of temper—the same liability to great elevation or depression of spirits, to extremes of gladness and sorrow—the same high sense of honour, of moral right, of religion—the same enthusiasm in

dreaming of the future. Moreover, there were about his dress, his gait, his way of speaking, a neatness, taste, and gracefulness ; and upon all his manners and habits was stamped the gentleman, as far as that character comes by nature, without the aid of art. He never appeared wilfully by deed or by word to give annoyance to any creature—to the servants and others, his inferiors in rank, he was always kind and affable without familiarity. Mimicry was a thing he never practised in any circumstances. He took no pleasure in taunting or irritating his companions, or in vexing any defenceless being or tormenting any animal. Of the house-dogs he was an especial patron, and the horses were all his friends. The emotions of pity and of gratitude were both eminently active in his mind, and continually moved him to tears ; while anything insulting roused him to the most violent rage, which again, by one expression of kindness or apology from its object, would be converted into a fit of crying, followed by an immediate readiness to make up friendship.

Add to these traits a figure of much boyish elegance, and features of perfect regularity, beaming with an expression at some times almost angelic in its

sweetness, and also the innocence and simplicity of a home-reared child of eleven or twelve years of age, and you have before your mind the pet—the adopted boy of him you already know so well.

But it would be wrong to imagine we wish to paint him as a paragon—one without fault, such as could only exist in the pages of romance. Rousseau, in his “Confessions,” detailing the character of his boyhood, says,—

“I had indeed the defects incident to this early period of life. I was a prattler, a glutton, and sometimes a liar. I made no scruple of pilfering fruit, sweetmeats, and eatables, but I never took pleasure in doing mischief, in accusing my playfellows, or in tormenting flies or any other animals.”

And this character we must confess, in its bad points, was sometimes applicable, but in its good a hundredfold more often, to our hero's little favourite, who, the reader will perhaps surmise, is also our own, and, besides, is more than the mere fancied *beau ideal* of a bachelor's dream. He had many faults, but, when told of them, and reproved with judgment, the extent and sincerity of his penitence and sorrow made reproof almost painful, while he seemed a child that no kind-



ness or indulgence could render either "soft" or "spoiled."

The teaching such a pupil as this must have been, in very truth, to one with a mind constituted like May's, a delightful task, as Thomson sings in that passage which the universal sympathy and consent of readers has made the most hackneyed in our literature. It was indeed to him a pleasure, such as he had never known since that day he fled heart-stricken from his home.

From the first hour they met, Basil observed in this boy a strange attraction toward him, which, moreover, he was somewhat surprised to feel reciprocated in his own mind. He could not account for the regard he thus so suddenly entertained for the youth. He was certainly the finest boy he had ever seen, and this, along with the fact of his being his namesake, and having been spoken of by the master, was all he could think of as causing the feeling. The emotion, too, of loving any object, was to him quite novel; for through a period of years he had not had any friend, and but very few acquaintances, whose society, besides, had been rather a burden to him than desirable.

In the course of a few weeks they had become inse-

parable companions, and seemed to feel much and mutual delight in each other's society. They walked and rode about the neighbourhood together, and at home were always side by side. The effect was soon evident on little Gerald—he took to his books with more zeal and assiduity than any other boy in the school, and soon fully redeemed his character for talent. At the same time he lost much of his devotion to the playground, and would have neglected it altogether were it not that Basil used sometimes to applaud his dexterity at the various games. And the stimulus to all this was the approval of his friend. One word of praise could do more than twenty applications of the rod, while, if anything wrong was going on, a single serious look would make him cease on the instant, and go away to another corner of the room, where he would sit as quiet as a mouse till some word of kindness would draw him from his hiding.

Basil was his constant reference in all cases of doubt or difficulty—the mender of inkstands, books, and playthings—the surgeon of all cuts and bruises. He was made the confidant of all his thoughts and feelings—the injuries received from his playmates—his determinations not to submit to them—his dislike of

some and good opinion of others—and, deepest and most delicate of all, his warm admiration of a pretty little girl of eight or ten years old, the daughter of a surgeon in the neighbourhood, whose principal charms were a blue frock, red cheeks, and “such hair!”

As they rambled about together, the subjects of their conversation were sometimes curious—such as moral right and wrong, justice, honour, courage, beauty of scenery or of any object, taste, and the like. On such topics Basil used to listen with great pleasure to his little friend’s ideas, treating him always as an equal, and allowing him his full half of the conversation; when his opinions were incorrect, mildly and playfully stating his own, and showing where the error lay. Frequently, too, he talked to him, but always with the air of a companion—one receiving as well as giving information—on matters of natural history, foreign countries, strange experiences of his own; or would tell him anecdotes of great men, or give him abstracts of the stories of plays and poems. And so happy did little Gerald feel in such circumstances, that he would often come to Basil, take him by the hand, and say, “Come and have a walk with me, and give me a lecture.”

One evening in summer, when they had had a long ramble together, gathering nuts and blackberries, Basil, tired out, sat down to rest by the sunny side of a rock crowned with an ancient tower. Little Gerald came and sat down by his side, and, after a long silence, bursting into tears, let his head fall upon his shoulder, and sobbed out,—

“My dear Mr. May, I don’t know how it is, but I am never happy but when I am with you. Are you a philosopher?”

Such were the traits that made Basil’s heart warm to this boy, towards whom he soon felt an affection that in its strength and peculiar character brought up to his mind that which he had borne long ago to his own father. It seemed the identical sort of feeling, equally intense and equally pleasurable. When Gerald was not near him he felt “a want,” as the expression is, while his mind was full of anxiety lest some accident might happen to him; he could never apply his thoughts seriously to any subject unless he was under his eye, nor did he ever feel cheerful save when the clear voice and merry laugh of his little favourite were ringing in his ear.

The greatest punishment Basil could inflict upon



Gerald was to withhold his countenance from him—not to speak to him for some days; and this the culprit felt most acutely. He was very miserable indeed, and the ways he took to get once more into his good graces were as amusing as they were endearing. Aware that Basil was always pleased with him for studiousness, he would get hold of some great volume, and, seating himself a little from him, would pore closely over it for hours, ever and anon lifting his eyes to see if he were noticing how diligent he was, or if the stern expression of his face were relaxing. To such a proceeding his obduracy was sure to yield, and they would speedily be friends again.

When Gerald was ill, as he was once dangerously, Basil's anxiety was increased to torture: he was hardly able to go through his avocations as a teacher, and at night could not sleep. He felt a constant impulse to go to him to see whether he was not better, and at last seated himself beside his bed, and took upon himself the office of nurse, although the disease was an infectious one, and he was certain he had never had it himself. Nor was it till he was pronounced convalescent that he recovered his peace of mind, or was fit for any exertion.

On another occasion Gerald, with some others, had been found guilty of some very heinous schoolboy offence, for which condign punishment was demanded. Basil pleaded much to get him off; but stern justice, in the shape of Mr. Elderley, was inexorable; and he had to look on, while every blow inflicted on his little favourite made his own nerves thrill with double the pain.

But this was prior to the illness. In the course of his recovery from the latter he was one evening expressing, with tears, his gratitude and affection to such a disinterested friend:—

“ I like you very well, indeed,” said he; “ better than any one else.”

“ What, Gerald, better than your father and mother, and all at home ?”

“ You know it would not be right to love anybody better than them.”

“ But, after them, I am the best liked, I hope.”

“ Yes; but I like my grandfather very well, too.”

“ Is he very kind to you ?”

“ Oh, very kind; but not so kind nor so good as you are. I wish you were some relation to me.”

“ You know you are my little adopted son—my son Gerald.”

“ Yes, that’s all very fine, but when I leave you and go home you will soon forget all about me.”

About a month after this, when he was again well and active, and running about as before, he was suddenly called home to his friends. This was a blow sufficiently severe to Basil, who had for several months felt all but happy in his society.

If you have a dog, an attached and beautiful animal, which is the companion of all your walks, eats from your hand, and sleeps by your feet, which has fondness for none but yourself, and bounds with joy at a word or a look from you—if this creature is suddenly lost, do you not mourn with a grief greater than you would like to confess, but which is shown by the magnitude of the reward you offer for its restoration, by your anxiety, and by your joy when it is brought back to you with all its gladness and affection? With how much more sorrow would not one, and especially one of that character we have endeavoured to shadow forth under the name of Basil May, lament the loss of a fair child, a pure and noble being, whose love is the effect of bright reason, not of instinct, who possesses

high mental beauty in addition to corporeal grace, whose thoughts and deeds are the result, not of the mere principle of animal life, but of an ever-living soul ! It was indeed with much emotion they parted ; and Basil, as he kissed his forehead and bade him farewell, felt there was taken from him the only one to whom his heart had ever warmed in friendship.

But the pang of parting lies not in saying adieu : it comes in its full strength some time afterwards ; for the image of the object is so recent in your mind that you cannot at first completely feel its absence. But when a space has elapsed, and your thoughts have had time to settle—when the idea comes plainly before you that he or she, your friend or your love, is gone and will return no more—not till then do you feel yourself desolate, nor till then does the full tide of your sorrow gush upon your heart.

For some days Basil was so shaken in his mind as to be utterly unable to go through his work in the school, a fact which he stated to Mr. Elderley, who, thinking him unwell, for he was always nervous and delicate in health, recommended him to take exercise, and willingly relieved him from his duties, himself undertaking them.



He now gave his time to wandering about the neighbourhood, lingering alone on the sunny days in those scenes where he had rambled, making himself a very boy, playing with his childish favourite and friend, and of evenings poring sadly over those books out of which he had instructed him.

This lasted for many days ; at last it was broken up, and by an affair of business, a proposition from the company of chemists before alluded to. They stated that, as their works, which were daily increasing in extent, were beginning to be confined for want of space, they were desirous of adding to them his ground and the buildings upon it, and were willing to buy them at the rate of ten years' purchase according to the annual rental before the erection of their manufactory, or, if he preferred it, to admit him as a partner, with that amount of share in the concern.

He immediately called upon his agent, directing him to close with the former proposal, and take the money—intending to purchase with it a life annuity, one-half of which he should continue to pay to his wife.

He was now independent again, and his intention was to return to his former way of living, and become

an idle wanderer in the world ; for, now that Gerald was not by, his thoughts continually reverted to her in Scotland ; and, while he was actuated by a strong curiosity with regard to what had become of her during his long absence, yet he felt as strong an impulse as ever to flee from her presence, and actually trembled lest the transaction of disposing of his property might give her a clue whereby to find out where he was, and, by letters or personal interviews, once more rake up all the agonies that were now subsided and calm, though unfathomable, in his mind.

On his return to the school, to notify to Mr. Elderley his future intentions, he found a letter from Gerald awaiting him. It stated that the occasion of his being so suddenly called away was the severe illness of his grandfather, which had terminated in death two days after his arrival at home. It was not the intention of his friends to send him again to school, it continued, but to engage for him a private tutor, who should reside in the house.

The moment May read this an idea struck him. He was now altogether his own master once more—again without an aim in life. It mattered little where he went, or what he did, provided time glided away—

might he not go and apply for this situation? Mr. Elderley would give him every recommendation; and it was surely as well to employ a year or two of his time in the instruction of this boy—an employment which had formerly yielded him so much pleasure—as in idly wandering from place to place. If he did obtain the situation, he would enjoy the society of the only one for whose society he had ever cared—he would have in his own hands the guidance, the rearing, of that child whose ultimate welfare was the object of his deepest interest, and could keep him out of the way of evil till he was old enough to hold that guard himself. If he did not obtain it, he could at least once more see one to whom he bore so strong an attachment, and gratify the curiosity he could not help feeling as to the characters and appearance of his friends and his home.

Gerald's letter contained his address, a villa on the south coast of England, opposite the Isle of Wight; and it was described in such plain terms that there was no chance of his being unable to find it out. With a letter of recommendation then from Mr. Elderley he took his way southwards, and on the morning of a day in summer found himself close to the villa.

His impression from its exterior aspect was that the inhabitants must be very wealthy; there was an air of comfort and substance about the house, garden, and offices, that betokened moneyed retirement. With a heart palpitating from embarrassment he walked up the avenue and knocked at the door, which the next instant was pulled open by his own little favourite, who all but jumped into his arms. He had seen his approach from an upper window, and had flown to meet him. In eager haste he drew him past a sluggish-looking servant into a room where, with the tears of joy starting in his eyes, he redoubled question on question—Why he had left the school?—had he come to see him only?—how long could he stay?

Basil told him he had received his letter, and had come to apply for the situation of tutor—that he never intended to go back to the school again.

At this information Gerald did all but scream for gladness, and bounded away upstairs to inform his mother that the usher who had been so good to him at Mr. Elderley's was come to be his tutor, with that gentleman's recommendation. In a minute he returned to lead him to her presence.

As they entered the room Basil perceived it was a



very magnificently furnished apartment. One object that caught his eye was a large portrait in oil colours, in a very rich frame, which appeared to have been removed from the wall, and now stood on the floor, placed back against a kind of temporary easel. At a table near one of the windows sat a lady in a mourning dress, employed in drawing, apparently copying the picture.

He blushed, from his natural bashfulness, and advanced, looking to the floor. When he raised his eyes he saw the lady standing up, holding fast by the table, seemingly to preserve her balance, as one would do in a ship at sea, while several of the drawing materials lay upset on the carpet beside her. He was surprised at this, looked at her intently, and the next instant dropped into a chair from sudden powerlessness, whilst the flush of confusion upon his face changed to a fearful pallor.

They remained so for a space—at length, “Is it you?” she said, slowly, and in a voice low, thrilling, and strange, as if not she, but some third invisible being spoke.

“Have you found me?” was all he could articulate in reply.

Yes, it was she—his wife—it was Marianne ! But what is it that brings that unnatural livid tinge to his lips and the space round his eyes—that makes him shake as if a cold wind pierced him, and breathe gaspingly as if there were some constriction in his throat ? It is the features of the abhorred Warkworth, staring upon him out of that portrait in all their manly beauty, and with the expression of haughty indifference that was habitual to them.

Little Gerald, who had stood by in wonder and perplexity at such a scene, at length came close to him, and said something which he could not comprehend.

“ Who is that boy ? ” he asked, pointing to him with his finger.

“ He is your son, Basil ; your child, and my only offspring.”

And she moved towards him as if she felt an impulse to cast herself upon his neck.

“ Off, woman, off ! ” he screamed, motioning her violently away with one hand, while with the other, which shook spasmodically, he pointed to the portrait.

“ Who is that—who is that ? ”

“ It is *my father*, Henry Warkworth ! ”

“Your father?”

“Yes, Basil, my father, and the betrayer of my unhappy mother. Yes, it can harm no one now, they are all in the grave. There was a stain, Basil—a stain on my birth.”

He sat for more than a minute, giving by movement or expression no sign of life, but like one in a catalepsy; for the spirit was so busied in itself, so wholly occupied in *thinking*, as to have no energy to spare for muscular motion of tongue, eye, or feature. At last, somewhat recovering himself,—

“Is this the truth?” said he, in a voice clearly articulated, but as low in sound as a whisper.

“If it is not, may God judge me! You will not despise me for my birth—oh, I am sure you will not!” And falling on her knees beside him as he sat, she flung her arms around his neck, and wept and sobbed with her face in his bosom. He did not push her away, but pressed her to his heart, and looked upward.

“I see it all now! Inscrutable Providence!—it must be so. My love for this boy has been the yearning of natural affection. Marianne, dearest, let me go.” And he made an effort to rise.

“I will not let you go,” she cried, amid the vehe-

mence of her weeping: "you will leave me again, you will forsake me for ever—you will—Gerald, my child, keep him. It is your father!"

"No, love, I will come again. This is too much for me—if I stay here I shall die. Let me breathe the open air, and look upon the bright sky and the trees and fields, and I will be all well again."

"Will you come back to me?"

"I will." And he tottered from the room, while she fell back upon a sofa near the door.

"Gerald," cried she, "go after him—go with him, for something will befall him. Go, Gerald, I cannot."

The boy flew to obey her, but was recalled by the sound of something falling. She had fainted away, and was now prone on the carpet.

With assistance from the servants she soon recovered, for, though gentle, delicate, and soft, she had always been healthy in body and mind. She would not be put to bed, but, drinking some wine to strengthen her, and bidding them open the window, she sat down to await the return of her husband.

For him, he wandered away for miles through the thick-hedged lanes and by-roads, and by the lonely shore, till, coming to a green bank, between a patch of



copsewood and the sea, he sat down on the grass by himself, with no being nearer to him than some fishermen, whose boat was slowly gliding along, in the heat of the day, about half a mile distant. There he remained for some hours longer, gazing abroad on the fair face of nature, but not regarding it, there being a world of thoughts within himself.

At length his heart gave way, and he wept like a child for a space. It was the first time he had done so since the death of his father in his early youth, and he felt now, for the time, as if his strength of mind and frame were gone, and he were once more a weakly boy. But this fit passed over, and in another he rose and walked slowly back to the villa, his mind overflowed with joy, and his fancy busy at the novel work of building up dreams of future happiness.

That evening at sundown beheld them again seated side by side at one of the windows of the same room. They are both now calm and composed, and have been mutually explaining the past. He has told her of his fervent love, his jealousy, and his long period of misery, and asks her to unfold to him the history of her birth, and the cause of so much mystery having been preserved. Her tale runs thus:—

“My father began life, without birth, rank, or capital, in the humble situation of a merchant’s clerk. My mother was the sister of a fellow-clerk, and besides this brother had no living relation. My father’s look and manner captivated her, and she became altogether devoted to him. He loved her, too, very fondly, though his passion was as nothing to hers. At length, on a considerable increase of his salary, which was owing to the partiality of his employer’s lady, he proposed to my mother a private marriage—one of law, without any ceremony of religion. My mother was infatuated enough to consent, and they were married in this way. It was a compact in the presence of witnesses, between two single persons of mature years, to become man and wife, and was authenticated by a document signed by both, and by the witnesses as evidence of the transaction. This, you are aware, in Scotland, constitutes a marriage in the eye of the law, though not in that of the church.

“The reason my father gave her for such a step was that, if he were known to be a married man, he was certain he would lose the favour of his mistress, and so have destroyed bright prospects he was led to believe probable.

“Shortly after this marriage, my mother’s brother went abroad as a commercial agent to the East Indies, and, immediately after, my father’s employer died. A year did not elapse before my father coolly and publicly married his widow, a person of whom he used to speak to my mother as a doting old fool. This action was done in England, where he immediately took up his residence, having by it become possessed of a fortune of many thousand pounds, along with half a share in one of the most extensive and improvable businesses in the country, of the English portion of which he forthwith assumed the management.

“When my mother knew this, she was distracted. He came to her and explained. He had married the woman, he said, solely as a business speculation—for fortune; and offered to share with her the proceeds of his crime. She was very old, he said, and must soon die, when he should be free again, and possessed of vast wealth, all of which should be hers.

“My mother spurned the proposal with abhorrence, and commanded him from her presence for ever. She would not prosecute him or appeal to the law for her right. She could not expose his criminality, for her own shame must also be laid open. She resolved to

hide herself from the world, and brood over her misery alone for the rest of her life, which she was convinced could not be long—to resume her own family name, and go to some crowded place where no one could know her—there to give her hopes to another world than this. Whether she was right or wrong in these steps I cannot judge—I leave it to your own heart to form an opinion.

“From the day her evil fortune was first made known to her, she never touched a farthing of his money, but, gathering as much as she could of her own, began that occupation in which you saw her in the town where you came to study. A month or two after her settlement there I was born. She became a heartbroken woman, seemed prematurely aged, and never went out but to church. Yet she often appeared to me to enjoy a sort of unworldly happiness in the practice of religion, to which she devoted herself with a constancy and fervour that I often thought interfered with her fondness for me. I know she never so poured out all her heart on me in tenderness, or felt the same delight or consolation in me, as I did in my child, when I, too, was left by him I loved.”

There was here an interruption in her narrative.



“When I got to be a year or two old, my father became dotingly fond of me—nothing could keep him from me. He would brave my mother’s displeasure, her avoidance, even the bitter pain he saw his visits occasioned her, to have the delight of fondling his little daughter—for I was his only child. The most costly jewelled ornaments he used to bring me—of which I had a great treasure, though you never knew of it—and would submit to every hardship, to every loss from neglect of business, in travelling from England, but to see that I was well.

“When I grew up to be a girl and have a little discretion, he himself told me the whole tale (for I did not learn it from my mother’s lips); and with contrition, even with tears, would express to me his deep remorse and self-condemnation, his still-enduring admiration and love for my mother, and the misery he had entailed upon himself by his ambition for wealth and commercial distinction. He did everything for me that money could effect, procured me the most expensive teachers in various accomplishments, gave me all things in the way of dress or ornament that I desired, made me completely, and I believe solely, his confidant, and to my ear alone made known the place of

torment which he had made his home. He might have seemed to others haughty and contemptuous, even oppressive—a public sinner, and appearing to glory in sin; but to me he was always indulgent, affectionate, devoted, earnestly anxious for my welfare, strictly moral in every thought and expression—everything a father should be.

“I could not help loving him and pitying him—oh, how much!—for he had been all that was kind and loving to me from my earliest recollection. Yet my mother never stinted her disdain, her animosity towards him; and our interviews in her presence were so unpleasant, that he could only open his heart to me out of the house, and thus I was led to walk out with him frequently about the streets and the park.

“It was he who encouraged my connexion with you, Basil, approved of and urged me to our marriage, and expressed his design of bestowing upon me and my offspring the vast wealth he had accumulated as an attempt at atonement for the evil he had done my mother and myself. But when he saw the unhappy issue of the step, it preyed upon him more than tongue can tell. His health showed it, and still that demon of a wife, as he styled her, kept a tenacious

hold of life, to make every hour of his existence wretched.

“I lived with my mother till her death, which took place about two years after you left me. He then removed me from Scotland to this place. Some time afterwards his wife died, leaving all the property she had possessed to her own relations ; but the amount was not a fourth of what he had himself amassed in trade ; retiring with which he came here to me, and, gradually declining, died, as if from old age, though under forty years. His whole property he has bequeathed to me and your son.

“While he lived here he became a changed man, and, thoroughly repentant, sought, by the devout belief and practice of religion, to establish a hope for that happiness in another state of existence of which he had so miserably deprived himself in this.”

“Why did you not tell me of all this, Marianne? You should have had no secrets from your husband.”

“Alas ! Basil, I could not betray my father’s secret : I knew not how you might receive it. Had it become known, he might have been publicly tried for his crime ; how could I betray my father? Besides, I

knew your high feelings of honour, and feared to tell you of the stain on the legitimacy of your wife ; it might at the least have made you love me less. My father, moreover, had bound me by the strongest injunctions never to disclose it during his life. I did, indeed, resolve once to tell you so much at least as would have set at rest your jealousy, but I knew not how to break it."

"Oh, Marianne ! you must have had but a meagre idea of my character to dread that any fault of your parents, any conventional disgrace of birth, could ever have lowered my opinion, or lessened my love of you, so long as your own virtue was stainless."

Here they were interrupted—a knock was heard at the door.

"Come in, Gerald," said she.

"Gerald," said his father, "when did you change your name? how came you to spell it with an 'e' additional?"

"I don't spell it with an 'e.'"

"Then what is this?" said Basil, drawing his letter from his pocket, and showing him the signature.

"Oh, that—that's only a flourish after the final 'y.'"



“Marianne, what has become of our cottage in the North?”

“I believe it is as we left it, with all your books and furniture. My father paid the rent, and had it kept in order.”

“Then we shall go down there again, love—we shall break up this establishment, and hire other servants, who shall not know aught of our previous fortunes. Gerald shall not leave us till he is a man. We shall all be happy again. We have had our share of misery—may we hope that our trials are over! At all events, jealousy shall never cause us more disquietude.”

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## CHAPTER XVII.



## A HALLUCINATION.

OF all the strange situations in which it has been the lot of my eventful youth to be placed, the most remarkable was the temporary care of a private asylum for the insane. In the course of my medical studies I had frequently been thrown into society with a young gentleman, nephew to the proprietor of an establishment of the kind in question, in which he acted as assistant, or clerk. We soon formed an intimacy, and at length, when a necessity arose that he should visit some near relations in the north of Ireland, he requested me to favour him by performing his duty in the house for a week or two during his absence.

As it was not inconvenient to me at the time, and I was very desirous to see the mode of treatment prac-

tised by the proprietor, who, though not by profession a medical man, had no indifferent reputation in his peculiar line, I was very glad to take advantage of the offer, and soon found myself at the establishment.

I was particular to make inquiry of my friend with regard to the nature of the cases to be under my care, and was informed that the house was unusually empty at the time, there not being more than fifteen patients in it, and that few of the cases were possessed of much interest, with the exception of one, whose peculiarities he forthwith proceeded to explain to me.

“The individual,” said he, “is a young Pole, by name Loretan Maryanski, a person of very high talent; and his hallucination is, that, on the Pythagorean principle, his body is animated by no less a soul than that of the celebrated hero Kosciusko. So long as you avoid interference with this idea, you will find him a most intelligent and accomplished young fellow—a gentleman in every respect. He was a student of medicine in London for some years—in fact, he has not been many months with us—and, strange enough, he devoted, all along, very much attention to the study of mental disorders, upon which subject you will find his information nearly unimpeachable. He believes that

he is at present, as a pupil, prosecuting his studies of that class of disease in our asylum, and devotes much attention to all the cases, whilst his care and humanity to the sufferers are unremitting.

“His father was a nobleman of one of the lesser grades in Lithuania, I believe, who, having taken an energetic part in the last insurrection, found it necessary to flee to England, and, along with others in similar circumstances, to become a pensioner on the bounty of our countrymen. By this means, and also from a tolerable income he could make by acting as foreign clerk to an extensive mercantile house, and by employing his spare hours in teaching German and French, he has been enabled to rear a family in comfort, and also to educate his eldest son for the medical profession.

“Loretan was a good classical scholar before he was brought to England, and was also well acquainted with German, French, and English. The last he speaks with very little foreign accent, and is moreover familiar with almost all its idioms, a facility in acquiring which, as well as the accent, is, I am informed, a peculiar property of his countrymen, beyond the people of any other continental nation. As a student



he was most devoted, giving his great talents completely to his tasks, nor ever allowing the usual temptations of youth to draw him for a moment from them. I have often thought that, when a man of active and original intellect has never been allowed—by constraint, whether of others, or self-imposed—to mingle with society, but has, from his earliest experience, associated with books, and not with men (if you will allow me the expression),—when in addition he has the strong motives of emulation and knowledge of his own powers, or the stronger still of necessity, to force him to his solitary studies—he creates around him a strange world—book-derived—which is quite different from that of ordinary life, and really constitutes a kind of insanity. The idea of madness from much learning would appear to have been a prevalent one from the days of the apostle Paul to our own; and when you reflect how many of the most noble minds of this age have sunk and been extinguished in imbecility and mania, you will probably have a clearer view than otherwise, as well of my precise drift in the argument, as of the case of my poor friend Maryanski.

“His disorder had long been suspected of overstepping the bounds of eccentricity. He began to

talk mysteriously of the possibility of holding intercourse with superior beings, to mention the old doctrine of Rosicrucianism with approbation, and seriously express his belief in the theory of the transmigration of souls. At length his hallucination took form, and he coolly and frequently enough announced himself to be the dead hero revived. These ideas his fellow-students received at first with ridicule, till at length it proved somewhat more than a joke to one. Several of them were together in a bookseller's shop, which they were in the habit of frequenting. He was among them, and found means, in the course of conversation on a German physiological work, to introduce his favourite notion, narrating several interesting anecdotes of himself when Kosciusko, which I am afraid are not to be found recorded in any life of that personage. But one of the students, 'more waggish than wise, ventured to tell him that he too had recollections of a similar kind, having in a former state of existence actually been the celebrated Marshal Suwarrow. The word had hardly left his lips, when the Pole, in a burst of frenzy that was plainly maniacal, seized a ponderous beam of iron, the bar used to fix the window-shutters at night, and, heaving it aloft, brought it

down with his whole strength in the direction of the unlucky jester's crown, accompanying the act with a wild shriek that speedily collected a crowd round the door. Had the blow reached its aim, it would undoubtedly have sent the spirit of the Russian in quest of a less jocular tabernacle. As it was, the poor fellow had just time to start to one side, when the iron descended upon him; his arm, which he had instinctively thrown up, received it, and both bones were fractured.

“After this he went beyond all bounds, and in a few days, on the authority of the coroner, he was certified insane, and placed by his friends under our charge.

“Since then he has only had one paroxysm, which indeed happened closely after his arrival, and was so violent as to require the whirling-chair.\* So far as we can judge, he appears to be now in a steady way of recovery.

\* This machine, frequently used in the violent fits of maniacs, consists of a chair fixed upon a pivot, and so constructed that, with the unfortunate creature in it, it can be made to revolve with great rapidity. Its calming effect upon patients is complete at the time, but whether permanently useful must be questionable.

“We make a practice never to allude to the hallucinations of any patient. The allusions they make to it themselves are allowed to pass apparently altogether unremarked ; while, by affording them other pursuits of an active and engrossing nature, we endeavour to lead them altogether from employing their thoughts on the topic. I considered it as well to mention this, in order that, as you will be constantly in his society, you may follow a course in consonance with our system.

“You will find he does clerk’s business in the asylum ; takes reports, keeps the journal, looks after the dieting, and affects to have a sharp eye over the keepers. Of course you will require to do all these duties yourself, though you will find him of amazing value to you in a variety of ways. You must take care that no historical work of any kind, no atlas, globes, nor any newspapers or periodicals, come where they can possibly be seen by him. The time he is not occupied with his fancied duties you will find him devote to the perusal of books from my uncle’s library, all regarding or bearing upon his own malady, such as Abercromby, Pinel, Reports of Commissions on Lunatic Asylums, Quetelet, Dr. Hibbert’s book, and a host of others ; or to the study of botany, which he



prosecutes with very great ardour. He is allowed to go out about the fields as often as he chooses, but Jackson the keeper always accompanies him, on the pretext of carrying his plant-case, which we have purposely had made very clumsy and inconvenient, as if to require such attendance.

“I should state to you that you must never betray the slightest evidence of timorousness when alone with him ; for if you attend to the above instructions he is altogether harmless, and, moreover, a most agreeable companion ; whilst the least appearance of such a feeling gives him great uneasiness ; for madmen, however strong may be their own notions, have always a suspicion about what people think of them, and any indication of the kind on your part will make him very despondent, and probably for a considerable time divert him from the salutary pursuits he is at present so much engrossed with. You may be as obstinate as you like with him in any discussion, you will always find his manner marked by good-humour and courtesy ; whilst at the clear and masterly nature of his views on a multitude of subjects you will be struck with surprise.

“One of his prime accomplishments, I had almost

forgot to say, is drawing. Some of his productions in this way are admirable. They appear so to me, though I must confess I have no particular taste in the art, but I have heard them praised even more highly by others whose opinion is not so questionable.”

Such was the account I received of this young man, and my experience shortly convinced me of its correctness.

His appearance was somewhat remarkable. He was what is called a fine-looking man, and had about him that indescribable cast of features and gestures by which it is almost always possible to know a foreigner. His eyes especially, large, prominent, and of a bluish-gray colour, darted rapidly from one direction to another, and their glance had that peculiar expression whereby some think that they can detect, at the first look, an insane person, or one subject to epilepsy. His voice was very sweet in its sound, and the slight foreign accent lent it a degree of interest that rendered him a most pleasant companion to discourse with. In talent and information I found him to be indeed all that my friend had promised, and very soon got much attached to him; whilst the reflection that this fine intellect was unsound, and profitless to himself

or his fellow-creatures, added a feeling of melancholy to the regard I felt for him.

He dressed plainly, but had a taste for jewellery and for fine linen. He was fond of smoking, too, a habit he had acquired long before his illness, and of which those under whose treatment he was had thought it advisable to permit his continuance. He used Turkish tobacco, in a long pipe of straight stick with the bark on, which had a red clay bowl at one end, and a gilded amber mouth-piece at the other. I have since seen these in common use in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, but it was quite novel to me at the time, and added to the strange and outlandish appearance of all the man.

After I had been some days at the asylum, he used to come every evening to my apartment, generally with a book or portfolio under his arm, and we would smoke and drink coffee by ourselves for an hour or so, and talk over the contents of the volume. His very large collection, too, of sketches and water-colour drawings, was a fruitful source of pleasurable amusement to me on such occasions. They were certainly most masterly productions. A number were anatomical—chiefly copies of dissections of the nervous

system; and these were executed with a cleanness and sharpness of outline, and a correctness of form and colouring, that was indeed remarkable. I was particularly pleased with some drawings of the origin and distribution of the Trigemini, or fifth pair.

The reader who is in any degree acquainted with physiology will know what a difficult subject this is, whether for demonstration or copying on paper; yet to such minuteness had the dissection apparently been carried, and with such accuracy and taste had it been depicted, that I was perfectly delighted, and emphatically expressed my admiration and preference of them to all the others.

“Yes,” said he, “they are the best—they were the last I ever did of that description. I was an enthusiast then for anatomy, especially physiological. I dissected eight hours out of the twenty-four for about two years; and when my other classes took up my time by day, I used to go at it by night. My grand subject of investigation soon became the nervous system. I was incited and inspired by the discoveries of Bell, Marshall Hall, and others, and, convinced I too could do something, gave so much of mind to the study, that I regularly became unwell, and sometimes



think there has been a strange confusion in my mind ever since.”

He said this with a look and tone so mournful that I was much moved, and felt deeply for him. He paused awhile, then broke out suddenly, whilst his eyes flashed with strange lustre.

“ But what do you think, D——? my toils were at length rewarded, and gloriously. A discovery arose before me, in comparison with which all the boasted ones of the most distinguished names are but as dust. I actually found out, and now know, what is the nervous influence—where it resides—how to detect it, separate it from the body, accumulate it, treasure it up apart, make it obedient to my commands. Then first did I know what mind is, and how it acts upon matter, and is re-acted on. Then did I first ascertain the immortality of the soul, and—most interesting of discoveries!—find out the origin and transmigration of the spirit that animates my own frame.

“ What do you think I came here for, but to render my knowledge complete, by watching in its deranged and unsound state that mind which I had so long and so much studied in its perfect working?

“ In a year or two, when I have acquired a thorough

intimacy with the subject in every possible point of view, and had time to digest and arrange the facts in my thoughts, I will bring out a work that will strike the world with wonder, as did the deeds of Columbus, and open up an entirely new field for the speculations of ingenious men. The benefit I shall have conferred upon mankind will be incalculable. Who then will dread death, when he knows that his spirit can never die—that this awful event is simple as the changing of a garment—and that, by a method which I shall make public, when one body becomes no longer suited to him, he can choose another, in what rank or race best pleases him?

“ Oh, the wretched absurdity of hereditary honours ! Could men but know, when they lick the dust before a creature to whom the chance of bodily birth has given power, what sort of spiritual origin it hath, they would hide themselves for very shame of their monstrous folly ! Shakspeare talks of the base uses our clay may come to, and traces the dust of Cæsar till he finds it stopping a bung-hole. But look at yonder youthful duchess in her box at the opera, glittering with jewels—herself more dazzling in her beauty—the focus to which the beams from all eyes converge—the theme

of all conversation—the idol of all worship ! Whence came the soul, that, at the command of the Chief Spirit, entered into her frame when it first took form ? From the body of a hideous negro, which was corrupted to death by a loathsome leprosy, whilst itself was debased by ignorance, slavery, and unbridled passions, till it could scarcely be known from the disgusting matter of which it had been the life.

“ When this bright discovery first opened upon me, and the transports of the joy attendant had subsided into the proud but calm consciousness of a mighty triumph, you can form no idea of the feelings with which I looked back upon the gropings of men whom the unenlightened call and honour by the name ‘ philosopher.’ When I thought of their dreams about Matter and Mind, Consciousness, Cause and Effect, and other stumbling-blocks, I could only admire with how little talent a man may acquire the name. How would they regard my great revelation, when I chose to make it ? Would they treat me as they did Harvey ? No, they could not : they would be overwhelmed with the vastness of the new intellectual world that would be displayed before them ; and when they were, through its means, enabled to discern the

nature of the mighty spirit animating the body of the discoverer, and to know the deeds it has originated in the different bodies it has sojourned in, they would fall down and worship, knowing it to be as far above them as the Chief Spirit again has marked the distance between it and himself.

“Would you know the manner in which this great discovery was made? It was terrible”—(here he shuddered)—“as must always be any breaking through the laws of nature; for such is to be considered the first consciousness a man’s material senses have of the presence of an immaterial being. For about six months I had been tormenting my mind, speculating upon what could be the precise nature of that Influence, Fluid, or whatever else the ignorant call it, of which the brain is the reservoir, and the nerves the channels—whether it was a mere property of matter, or separately existent—if the latter, whether it was perishable or eternal. Methought, if I could establish their separate and independent being, then matter and spirit would be proved to be the only things that had existence: but matter, we already know, is indestructible—why should not spirit then be indestructible likewise? And, then, wherefore should the connexion of



a portion of spirit with matter be only solitary and temporary? Should it not rather be continual? And, as the organised portion of matter ceases in time to be capable of the connexion, should not a new portion be provided? and should not the spirit, upon the breaking up of one connexion, immediately form another, and thus migrate from body to body, suffering to be lost none of its power of being useful?

“Such is a specimen of the thoughts that filled my head, sleeping and waking, all the while I was endeavouring, by constant and most minute dissection, to gather facts whereon to build my hypotheses, and reading every book I could lay my hands on that bore in any degree upon the subject. I had a presentiment I should make some vast discovery, and grudged no labour nor expense which the most parsimonious living could enable me to afford. As the hospital dissecting-room was unsuitable for my pursuits, from the noise and continual interruption of young men, who appear to come to such places more as a lounge than for study, and also from the want of opportunity to dissect by night, I entered myself a pupil of Mr. P——’s private rooms.

“This place was situated in —— Lane, Southwark,

a dingy, disreputable hole, the unseemliness of which prevented the facilities for study which it afforded from being properly appreciated and taken advantage of. Only some of the very poorest students frequented it, though about a century ago it was the best attended anatomical school in London.

“The proprietor made no emolument from it, its sole use being to afford him the title of anatomist, which was of course of infinite advantage to him in practice. He was the descendant of two generations of eminent medical men who had lectured there, and whose valuable museums of morbid preparations he inherited. To find your way to it you turned from the lane up a dark covered passage for about fifty feet, then, emerging into a kind of court with blind walls all around, you saw before you a tall, dark building. The lower stories had been used formerly for a leather factory, but had long been deserted, and were now quite ruinous and empty. The upper stories formed the school, approachable by a staircase behind, to get at which you had to go through another arched passage, as dark, but shorter than the first. After mounting this, and entering within the wall of the building, you ascended two narrow staircases of wood,

and traversed a long passage with two doors, the further of which opened into the dissecting-room, the nearer into the theatre or class-room. Immediately under these were two large rooms, the museum, which opened at the top of the first wooden staircase. Their walls were concealed by shelves, crowded with cylindrical crystal bottles, containing various portions and organs of the body of man and of other animals, preserved in alcohol. Several of these were very ancient, and also most interesting, from the important phenomena of which they were the proofs or illustrations.

“In various cabinets, with glass fronts, were displayed bones varnished, preparations of the arteries, veins, and nerves—in short, the place had all the ghastly features of an anatomical museum, with the peculiar stillness, coldness, and strange earthy smell.

“The dissecting-room was an extensive hall, lighted by two large windows in the roof. From the ceiling, which was very high, depended a couple of skeletons, one of which had the thumb of its hand fixed up to the nose, in an attitude of derision, and the other had stuck between its teeth a short pipe, whilst one hand was made to hold a quizzing-glass to its empty socket.

All round the dead walls were hung up drawings of various organs, plans of their action, preparations of legs, arms, &c., in the process of drying, and the leather and cloth gowns of the pupils; whilst, to complete the picture, fancy a couple of tables, each bearing the cast-off and decaying tenement of a spirit, opened up in its intricate machinery to the eye, like a watch denuded of its case.

“Such was the scene in which I passed many a lonely night of hard and uninterrupted study, with no companion but my books, a small voltaic battery and coil, and some other instruments and apparatus of my own construction, of which no man but myself understands the nature.

“The place was plentifully supplied with light, the two windows taking up nearly the whole of the ceiling. In one of them I had fixed the reflector of a small solar microscope, with which I prosecuted my physiological investigations.

“But the first step towards my grand discovery was the finding a substance which had power to harden the nervous matter to an infinitely greater degree than alcohol, alum, corrosive sublimate, or any other antiseptic previously known.



“When my views began to open up more distinctly, I became apprehensive that my experiments and dissections might be watched ; and during the day I came only at those hours when I knew the other pupils were engaged elsewhere. The night was my chosen time for labour. To facilitate my proceedings in this way, the proprietor allowed me to have gaslight to what extent I liked, and to keep the keys of the various doors of the rooms.

“Night after night did I sit there, absorbed and rapt in my solitary study, my light visible to no human creature, and the only sound I heard being the dropping of a cinder from the fire, or the rattle of a mouse or rat among the bones in the glass cases below.

“Well, one day I was told by a young man, one of the pupils, that, as he was to go up to some examination next day, he wished to sit up all night, to study the bones. Of course I could not object, and that evening he came.

“After we had smoked together for a little at the fire, he took his book and the bones, and began to pore silently upon them. I resumed my labour, and soon became so absorbed as to be altogether un-

aware of his presence. I was dissecting on the side of the face, the branches of the fifth and seventh, where the motor twigs of the latter run into the sentient ones of the former—a fact into which an insight was essential to my progress. I was deeply engrossed with it for several hours.

“At length, when it was between midnight and one o’clock—(I knew the time from the cold feeling that always comes on one sitting up at that hour; if you have ever studied by night, you will know that there is no time when you feel so chilly, or when your fire, if you are inattentive to it, is so apt to go out, as this)—having been for a long time in a bent and cramped position, leaning over my task, I instinctively sat up erect, to relax my wearied muscles, and half absently looked out into the empty room.

“What was my surprise to behold another being besides myself standing on the opposite side of the table, and apparently scrutinising my dissection with much interest! My first impression was, that [the other student had left his own work, and come to look at mine; but, on turning my head to satisfy myself, I saw him laid along, sound asleep, on a form before the fire. My eyes now returned, with unspeakable

awe and terror, to the figure before me, and, rooted to my seat, with my forceps in one hand, and my scalpel in the other, I sat gazing on it, holding my breath, whilst my hair stood up, and a cold shivering ran through my limbs. But judge of my amazement, when, regarding it steadily, I saw its features to be identical in form and expression with those of the subject under my knife !

“I could easily perceive this, for I had only dissected one side of the face, and the other half was untouched, the open glassy eye of the corpse being one in colour with that which sparkled with unearthly radiance in the head of the spectre.

“Paralyzed with fear, I remained unable to remove my sight from its countenance. It stood with one hand behind, and the other in its bosom. The features had an expression of much intelligence, but seemed to have been wasted with continual distress, and wore a look of humiliation and hopelessness apparently habitual to them. Had I met such a figure by day in the street, I should have taken it for that of an artisan out of employ—most likely a hand-loom weaver. Round the waist a white apron, in appearance, was tied, which had been caught up and secured through

the string to one side, leaving a triangular corner hanging down before.

“The feelings which actuated it in this strange inspection appeared to be not at all of a wrathful description; deep interest and curiosity were all that I could read in the look that was so fixedly bent upon my work. Imagine the hour, the scene, the solitude, the silence, the ghastly remains that everywhere surrounded me !

“I looked around into the dim corners of the large hall, with the dark gowns, grim fragments of mortality, and blood-coloured pictures, darkly visible on the walls. Then my eye travelled to the yawning mouth of the pitchy passage leading down to the museum, and away to the far-distant lane. I turned my gaze aloft; there swung the two skeletons, both turned towards me, their caged ribs and sharp limb-bones distinctly lined and shaded, under the light of the single jet of gas that, depending from the ceiling over my table, illuminated the place, and their grotesque attitude adding a diabolic mockery to the dread and disgust themselves inspired; like the effect German romancers seek to produce when they tell of wild bursts of demoniac laughter, marking the rati-



fication of unhallowed compacts of mortals with the fiend.

“A feeling of terror now possessed me, so strange and strong that I can never express it in words. I wist not what to do—whether to address this unearthly visitant, to rise and flee from its presence, or experiment with the view to ascertain whether it might not be a delusion of the eye. You perhaps may consider, and many others with you, that this last would have been the most rational proceeding. It is all very well for one so to think, but, let him be placed in the circumstances, and how will he act?

“Retreating backwards under the influence of overpowering fear, I went to where the other student lay asleep before the fire, and endeavoured to wake him—not with any view that he might witness the phenomenon of this breach of nature’s laws, but solely from that master instinct that so urgently prompts us to seek the society of our own kind when we deem that beings of another order are near us.

“He was sound asleep, and, when I shook him, replied by some strangely murmured words of a dream. If you have ever had the nightmare, and, when some hideous monster pounced upon you, and you essayed

to spring away for very life, found yourself unaccountably devoid of powers to stir, you will have had an analogous, though very far from equal, feeling to what I experienced when I found that, though this young man was with me in the body, his spirit was away in far-distant scenes. There was now an idea of forsakenness, desolation, and defencelessness, mixed with the feelings of awe and terror—the sense of vague and undefinable, but dreadful danger, which had previously filled my mind. I would have cried out; but, had I power to scream—which I had not, for a temporary aphonia\* possessed me—who would have heard me? and if any did, how could they come to my help through those dismal and labyrinthine passages, black with the thickest darkness, and blocked with numerous gates and doors, of which the keys lay there on the table, close under the eyes of that dreadful phantom?—for, during my attempts to rouse my companion, it had moved round to where I had been sitting, and now, stooping down over my dissection, appeared to be closely and minutely inspecting it.

“As I looked at it, I perceived that the peculiar

\* Aphonia—loss of voice—a symptom that may arise from various diseases of the larynx.

apparatus which I have before alluded to, as planned and understood solely by myself, and which I had placed upon the table, around and over the subject, had become disarranged, and that various portions of it had fallen together, apparently by accident, forming entirely new combinations and co-operations.

“I could not help starting forward to remedy this, as my whole heart was fixed upon the success of my experiments, but had just hurriedly touched it, when the spectre turned its head, and looked calmly and inquiringly at me. I leaped back in affright, my momentary interference having confounded the apparatus more than ever ; in fact, I could not help fearing that it was altogether ruined.

“My concern at this was, however, in an instant absorbed in a new excitement. All at once the air of the apartment seemed to have acquired form, colour, and motion. A confused intermixture of vapoury wreaths, of every shade of colour, here and there dim and scarcely perceptible, but elsewhere more palpable and distinct, appeared to move hither and thither all over the large hall. More and more clear and vivid did they become, till at length the whole place seemed alive with a multitude of spectral figures, as plain to

the eye as the single apparition that had erewhile so disconcerted me. They appeared to be of both sexes, and of all ages, from mere infants up to the most elderly, and they moved about, apparently each engrossed with some pursuit of its own.

“I remarked that they did not avoid, or make way for each other to pass, as they glided about, but seemed to penetrate or go through each other. Two would come together, coalesce, their colours and forms seeming confounded, like one picture on paper seen behind another against a window. Then, emerging, they would become distinct and separate. Their features, too, were very clearly marked, and expressive, all different, and of a more or less intellectual cast. The same look, however, of deep interest, which I had remarked in the first instance, pervaded all their countenances. They gazed at me as they went, too, but again I perceived no appearance of anything like displeasure with me; in fact, they looked at me as they did at one another. They seemed to view with much attention the furniture and the whole paraphernalia about the room, especially the morbid preparations and drawings that stood and hung everywhere around.



“It was, indeed, a most striking spectacle. I stood crouching close to the fire, in wonder and fear, whilst my companion lay along in deep slumber, ever and anon murmuring in his dreams.

“They were continually changing their places, like a company in an exhibition-room, and moving along the passages to the lecturing-theatre, and down toward the museum. By and by I could perceive they had some means of holding converse with each other, and communicating ideas—not by speech, for I heard no sound. They even appeared now and then, as I watched them closely, to draw each other’s attention to particular objects, and sometimes to myself, seeming to converse interestedly with regard to me, and then they would move on as if some other thing attracted their thoughts.

“At once the idea occurred to me that these were the spirits of the many hundreds of individuals that had, for three or four generations back, found their final earthly resting-place in these rooms, and whose remains were preserved in the glass bottles and cases. Of the truth of this surmise I became immediately convinced, and curiosity then began to rise in my mind from under the weight of dread that had oppressed it.

“I have said that they appeared to be of all ages—they also seemed to have been of all callings and professions, of which their external appearance gave evidence. They were, likewise, of all ranks, from the nobleman to the beggar ; for the hand of the medical student for former times, like that of death, had no respect for persons, and it mattered not to him whether his subject were snatched from the sculptured vault and leaden coffin, or from the shallow grassy heap of the open churchyard.

“In respect of dress, a more motley masquerade could hardly be conceived. Here I would remark the elderly physician of bygone times, with his peruke, full-frilled shirt, velvet suit, diamond buckles, and gold-headed cane ; there the lady of quality, with her hooped petticoat, high-heeled shoes, monstrous head-dress, and the white of her complexion rendered more brilliant by fantastic patches of black ; now my eye rested on a grotesque figure that seemed to have walked out of one of Hogarth’s pictures ; then it would be attracted by another in the old conical-capped and white-breeched and gaitered uniform of a soldier ; anon it would shift to a beauty of the days of the latter Charles, with hat and feather, long train, luxu-

riant hair, deep stomacher, and necklace of pearl. All kinds of attire were there; old white-fronted naval uniforms, broad-skirted coats of silk and velvet, covered with lace, long-flapped waistcoats, periwigs, farthingales, sacques, hoods, plaids and philabegs, quaker broad-brims and collarless coats, jewelled rapiers, and glancing decorations,—though the majority seemed to have been of the lower classes, and wore dresses suited to their particular employments.

“Many there were that had their limbs in fetters; these were they who had expiated their crimes upon the tree, and had been afterwards given to the schools for dissection. Some were stout muscular bullies—these were burglars and highwaymen; several were pale, thin, darkly-dressed, and wearing the aspect of mercantile and professional men—these were forgers, and others guilty of similar offences.

“But the excitement—the terror—added to the fag of long study, want of food and of rest, were at last more than my exhausted frame was equal to, and I fell into some nervous fit, and remained for several hours insensible.

“When I recovered consciousness, the morning was far advanced—the sun shining gaily down through the

skylight, and gilding with joyous radiance even the forbidding walls and furniture of that loathsome chamber. The other pupil had awakened, and, finding me laid senseless on the floor, had adopted some professional means to restore me, which were successful.

“I went home to my rooms, and all that day gave myself up to a deep and refreshing slumber. But time was not to be lost, so next night I was again at my work—alone.

“I now proceeded to arrange and disarrange my apparatus as formerly, convinced as I was that it had some influence in calling before my vision the remarkable spectacle I had the previous evening been witness to. My efforts were perfectly successful. Shortly before midnight I had again the spectral masquerade moving around me.

“I was now less under the influence of awe or alarm, and, finding they had really no power to harm my body, I got familiar with them, and went on to experiment upon them night after night. At length I struck upon a plan whereby I could render these beings palpable to the sense of hearing as well as to that of sight. This was the crisis, the hinge upon



which the whole of my after discoveries turned. A while and I could call to my presence not only them, but spiritual essences of all degrees and descriptions ; for if the classes and orders of earthly things are numerous, upon those of spirits the process of mind we call numération cannot be brought to bear, so vast is the stupendous theme.

“It was not long before I could discourse with them, and to this nocturnal converse I devoted myself with my whole energy and enthusiasm. Things now all went on smoothly with me, and from one vast view to another I leaped with lightning celerity.

“Was it not a proud, a maddening thought, that I had rent open the curtain that veils the world of spirits from the eye of sense—that the abyss which sinks between mortality and immortality, matter and pure mind, was spanned by an arch of my construction, and that I could now snatch unbounded knowledge?—for time and space had no more power to check the excursions of my intellect !

“I now found not only that my former blind surmises and conclusions were all real, but that other facts existed, to the statement of which, in the wildest dreams of my unenlightened state, I could never have

given credence. But the aphorism ‘Know thyself’ clung to me, and one of the first and most exciting of my investigations was the inquiry into the nature and history of my own soul. With a delight beyond the conception of one whose spirit is not etherealized, I ascertained its origin, its migrations, and its destiny, and learned that almost all the noblest deeds which have been consummated in this world have been by bodies which it has animated ; but my delight was increased to the wildest rapture when I knew that the spirit now sojourning in my brain was that which had fired to their high deeds, Sobieski, the bulwark of Christendom, and Kosciusko, the—”

“Hillo !” cried I, starting as the poor Pole had got thus far in his rhapsody. The thought struck me instantaneously, “Was this the way to follow the instructions I had received with regard to his treatment—to fulfil my duty to my absent friend, and to him, too, my unfortunate patient, to whose ravings I was now listening with all interest and attention ?”

Up I sprang, covered with confusion, and unable to frame a pretence to break off the conference without exciting the suspicion or rousing the passion of the maniac.

“Excuse me for one moment,” said I: “the recollection has just struck me, I left a taper burning in the midst of some papers down in the doctor’s room.”

Away I ran, but in place of returning sent one of the keepers to watch him. This man, on entering, found him leaning forward upon the table, weeping piteously.

Next day one of his fits of despondency seized him, nor did he recover his former cheerfulness while I remained at the asylum. He hardly ever spoke to me, appearing much chagrined and embarrassed in my company, as a person does in that of any one before whom he has committed himself unwarily.

For my part, I looked upon him now with far different thoughts from what I had entertained before this singular disclosure. The narrative had riveted my attention whilst he delivered it, by its originality, its interest, and the absolute belief he appeared to feel in every incident. I was struck with the linking together of accurate reasoning, extravagance, and preposterous absurdity it evinced—at the many instances it displayed of a wildly exuberant and lawless fancy, breaking up and confounding the more sober faculties, till a sort of chaotic whole was produced, in

which fantastic conception, beauty and vigour of description, richness and power of creative imagination, scientific acquirement and research, were all blended together in an incongruous tissue of delirium. I could not help thinking, was not this a mind, if properly regulated and placed in suitable circumstances, to have conducted the most laborious investigations with adequate ability and success, and to have communicated the result in a manner equal to the importance of the subject,—a mind whose graces would have been as ornamental to society as its labours would have been useful? And now misfortune, haply mismanagement, had rendered it a melancholy, though by no means ridiculous, satire upon the class of intellects to which it belonged.

Shortly after quitting the asylum I went to travel, and did not return for eighteen months. The friend whose place I had thus temporarily filled was one of the first I sought on my arrival in England, and one of my earliest inquiries was with regard to what had become of my former patient, the Pole.

His fate I learned, but have some hesitation in narrating it here, unwilling to add to the scenes in these papers that seem to entail upon their author the



stigma of a dealer in the horrible and awful—a panderer to the inflamed taste that at present seems so much to gloat upon pictures of overdrawn and unnatural romance. As, however, the curiosity of the reader might be disappointed without it, I can only proceed in the way that appears to me to partake least of the character alluded to.

Not long after my departure, Maryanski was removed by his relations, with the view of being placed under the care of a practitioner in France. Hereafter he disappeared from the notice of my friend for about three or four months, till he was vividly brought before it by the following circumstances :—

One night a young lady, an actress, was travelling by one of the coaches that run between London and Exeter ; she was the only passenger. The night was cold, wet, windless, and dark, and no living thing could be seen from the vehicle, the lanterns of which were the sole lights that cheered the dreary road. The only noises audible, besides the mournful howling bark of some distant watch-dog, were the rattle of heavy drops on the roof, the hurried plashing of the horses' feet, and the occasional sounds of encouragement addressed to the animals by the coachman and guard,

anxious to get forward to where they knew that a good fire and comfortable meal awaited them.

The passenger endeavoured to while away the tedium of her midnight journey by watching through the rain-dimmed glass the stunted trees and cold-looking wet hedges, as, for a moment illumined by the passing glare of the lamps, they seemed to flit away ghost-like to the rear.

On a sudden, as the vehicle was crossing one of the gloomy and extensive plains that abound on that line of road, it was hailed from the wayside by a person who stood alone, enveloped in a voluminous cloak, and drenched with wet. The coachman halted, and, the stranger craving a passage to the next town, he opened the door for his entrance.

The lady remarked, as he passed under the light, something peculiar and unusual about his aspect, something by which she was led to believe him one of her own profession, and most likely travelling with similar views to hers. She was consequently induced to notice him with some interest.

As the vehicle drove on, he seated himself before her, with his back to the horses, and commenced a conversation, which—she being a woman of consider-

able talent—was kept up for some time with much spirit. The extraordinary manners and language of the stranger afforded her not a little entertainment at first, as she believed their peculiarities to be acted for the time, and she listened to him with great attention.

At length his topics and words became so strange and wild, that she could not follow them, and ceased to understand him. A feeling of wonder, doubt, and vague alarm seized her, and she sat trembling, and fervently wishing for the termination of the stage. Suddenly she heard a slight clicking sound, as of a small spring, and her eye could catch a dim metallic gleaming through the darkness of the vehicle : a moment, and the head of her fellow-traveller fell heavily forward upon her lap, and her hands were bathed with some scalding fluid. She screamed aloud—the horses were suddenly drawn up—the guard pulled open the door, and the light from the lantern showed him the lady, white as a sheet, gasping with terror, with the male passenger prone upon her knees, his head turned to one side, and air gurgling from a deep wound in his neck. In the bottom of the carriage was a pocket-case of surgical instruments, and a slender

bright bistoury, falling out as the door was opened, tinkled among the stones of the roadway.

I shall go no further with the scene.

This traveller turned out to be the young Pole, my former patient. In a pocket of the instrument-case was found a note, addressed Alexis Maryanski, of such a street, London—his father. It was in German, and merely stated that, finding his present body unsuited to him, he had made arrangements to divest himself of it, and take another.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.



## A CONFESSION.

I HAD finished my education, my diploma and licence were obtained, and now, a medical practitioner, I was to go forth into the world to look for that (no doubt) abundant harvest, of which I had thus completed so arduous and expensive a seed-time. While I was yet in ignorance how or where to commence the gathering in, a tolerable situation was, by the exertions of my friends, procured for me, viz. that of resident or house surgeon at an hospital then just erected in a rising town in the south of Ireland. I accepted it, and forthwith transported myself and effects to the place, and entered upon my new duties.

It was part of these to keep a journal of the cases, recording the causes, progress, and daily changing

symptoms of disease in each patient. Every report was required to commence with a short account of the name, appearance, employment, &c., of the individual, and the circumstances that had preceded or caused the injury or attack. The following narrative is founded upon one of such reports:—

My apartments in the hospital were just over the entrance-hall; the windows of my sitting-room looking down the avenue that led from the door, through the middle of a small field of grass in front of the building, to one of the quiet suburban streets of the town.

At this window I sat one afternoon looking out in a sort of dreamy, inattentive mood, when, on a sudden, my eye was caught by the scarlet coats and glittering arms of a body of four or five soldiers, who came into view in the usually unfrequented street, surrounding a cart, and keeping off a crowd of people who were running alongside, jumping on each other's shoulders, and making other efforts to obtain a view into it.

They entered the enclosure in front, and moved up the avenue, one of them remaining behind at the gate to keep back the people that followed. As the cart came nearer, I could see in it, from where I sat, an individual laid along, covered with some bedclothes

and canvas, and I immediately concluded it to be a patient—yet why one should come so strangely attended, rather excited my curiosity. I went out to make inquiries, and was informed by the corporal in charge that he was an illicit distiller recently apprehended, and had been passed on from some place in a distant part of the country to be confined in the gaol of the town. Moreover, that somehow in his capture he had been very dangerously wounded, and was sent to the hospital, it being intended that one of them should keep constant guard upon him till either he died or could be removed to prison.

I had him immediately taken into the house, and put to bed in a small apartment that branched off from one of the wards; while in the latter, a great whiskered soldier forthwith took up his position, giving, certainly, rather a striking aspect to the scene.

The kindness with which I treated my patient, and the care I took to prevent him from unnecessary shaking in being carried to his room, appeared to have won for me his good graces, which were much further gained by a glass of warm spirits and water which I considered it advisable to give him by way of stimulant. His name he gave me as Philip Erris, but I am

convinced that this was not his actual appellation. I was surprised to hear him speak very good and grammatical English, dashed certainly with the accent of his country, but totally different from the somewhat unpleasant patois of the locality.

On proceeding to the necessary examination, I found his whole body to be one mass of injury—shattered with many fractures : indeed, it has been always a matter of wonder to me how he could, for one moment, survive such an infliction, much more how he could bear to be carried so far and so roughly. But the chief seat of lesion was in the back. His spine was so much bruised, that he had lost all power and sense in his body and extremities. Not a muscle could he move, save those of the neck and face ; and he lay upon his back, every now and then giving his head a sudden jerk, accompanied by a twitching grin, half ludicrous, half fearful, but at any rate singularly unnatural in its expression.

The pain he felt must have been very poignant : he said it seemed, in every twinge, as if a redhot poker had been thrust down between his clothes and the skin of his back. His face and hair were wet with perspiration, and his eye burned with a fitful, glancing



lustre, a frightening indication of the agony the spirit, whose index it was, endured. Frequently, too, the beginning as it were of a deep groan would be forced from him, but, catching it short off by the middle (if I may use the expression), he would clench his teeth, and, holding his breath for a little, would let it escape slowly and softly out, so as not to produce any sound.

The bones of his lower limbs were completely smashed, and his haunches had been crushed together ; out of these parts he made no complaint—they had neither motion nor feeling ; the threads that connected them with the thinking centre were snapped asunder : to him they were even as the flesh of another man. In the morning of that day he had possessed some sensation and power of motion in his arms and hands—that was all gone now ; nothing but his neck, head, and features obeyed his will, and the disorganization appeared to be rapidly creeping up toward the brain.

He had been a short, thin, wiry man, of a most active make, and was dark complexioned, with sharp, strongly-marked features, very expressive. His hair was grizzled, and on each cheek was a patch of burning red, the hectic of exceeding pain. His bearing

and language were very reckless—evidently so by effort: indeed, he seemed desirous of dying *hard*, as I believe the word is used.

On my inquiring his calling and the circumstances of his injury, he replied,—

“It’s no use, doctor; my sack is run\*—I feel it. I shall cheat somebody, I know. Could you spare me a drop more of that *last medicine*? It’s the only thing that’s like to do me good now.”

“No, my good man, I am afraid, rather, you have got an overdose of that same drug.”

“Yes,” said he, “I got a taste at every public-house as we came along; had it not been for that, I should have *kicked* this morning—not that I care much about that, as there’s no helping it, I believe; but I thought it would be as well to enjoy what I could of the creature before going to a quarter where there will be little or no potyeen, whatever else there may be in plenty.”

My curiosity was strongly excited to learn the way in which such an extensive and singular injury had

\* To “run a sack” is, I believe, the technical expression among the illicit distillers in Ireland for malting and distilling a bag of grain.

been received. I redoubled question on question with the view to elicit it. At length, when, observing him to be a very intelligent man, I had shown him, in the journal, the commencement of several other reports, a new idea appeared to arise in his mind.

“How many hours have I to live, doctor?” said he :  
“come, be honest—one, two, or three, think you?”

I took refuge from this question in a shake of the head, as wise as so young a practitioner could be expected to accomplish.

“Well,” said he, in a ruminating way, “I don’t care if I do tell you a thing or two, for a change: they have been now some twenty years at least untold, and to tell them you will have quite the charm of variety ; so come nearer, and I will give you a report that will bang e’er a one in your writing-book.”

WHEN I was a very young man, I believe I was what is called a wild-going slip of a lad. I was fond of company, and that none of the most refined or select description—fond of late hours—a passionate adorer of the sex—a devoted sportsman, at least in cock and dog fighting, badger-drawing, and general gaming. Besides, I took to drinking very early—indeed, I have

no recollection of perfect sobriety. Nor was this latter fact so unnatural, for my father was a distiller, a manufacturer of spirits, on the most extensive scale of any in the south of Ireland.

He managed the manufacture himself, and our house was part of the buildings of the distillery. I was his only son, and, as my mother had left his house, on account of something or other, I had no one to look sharp after me ; so that, wandering about among the workmen, I speedily acquired a thorough practical knowledge of whisky in all its departments—malting, distilling, and drinking. He was a very old man, of a disposition exceedingly obstinate and overbearing,—a strictly moral person, and of all the formalities of religion most rigidly observant ; actuated all the while by, I fervently believe, the sincerest devotional sentiments. He was a Protestant, and belonged to a very strict community of sectarians, most intolerant of any the lightest solecisms in morality. Again, he was penurious to the last degree, holding liberality a mortal sin—nay, even common mirth he considered as a degree of evil.

His whole thoughts, for this world, were directed to his business—to his distillery. He had made it what



it was (having begun life upon a very limited scale), and to make it this had been the grand object of his lifetime: he looked upon it, and felt towards it, as one might regard a child of his own that had grown up under his training to be a brawny and powerful man.

My mother was quite a girl when her friends, dazzled by his wealth and upright character, forced her upon him. They never took to each other, for she was a light-thinking, giddy creature. Worse than that was said of her; but she was my mother, and on that point I will speak no further, save that, whether she left his house, according to some accounts, or he turned her out of it, as other stories run, she lived on a separate maintenance, in a distant part of the country, till I was nearly grown up, when she died, of what ailment I could never learn precisely.

My father took care to provide for me the best education the place could afford; but, in addition, required that I should give all my serious attention to the distillery, and consider myself as born to carry on and increase the trade. This was his favourite phrase, as it was his favourite idea. He seemed to think, not that he had established a business to support his

offspring, but that he had got offspring to support his business.

But I was idle and dissipated, and, conceal it as I might—and very well I did it—it came to his knowledge ; and most fearful scenes sometimes occurred between us. We lived in the loneliest way, saw no friends, and had but three servants—one a poor weak old man, labouring under a chronic disease, who had been browbeaten into a state of almost perfect idiocy ; the other, cook and housemaid ; and the third, a coarse girl of all-work. From such a home, you may well credit me, I absented myself to the extremest limits prudence could define.

But suddenly that house acquired a charm that bound me to it with an attraction in itself a thousand-fold more potent than all the many temptations that had erewhile drawn me from it.

One of our housemaids—and the practice had been regular with a long succession of them—wearied of my father's manner, left as soon as she could with safety to her wages, and he immediately procured another in her stead. How or where he found her I never knew. I gave myself no concern ; but the moment I saw her I formed a purpose, the guilt of

which often rises up in my mind recriminatively when I lament at my destiny.

She was very beautiful. I have seen many women in my restless lifetime, in many parts of the world, some of them celebrated; but certainly she was the most lovely my eyes ever drank delight from looking on. I am convinced that any man, whatever might have been his highest motive, his most enthusiastic pursuit, the instant her smile lighted on him, would have forsaken, forgotten that motive or pursuit—his ruling passion would have been changed to love—his highest aspiration would have become to acquire the regard of one so surpassingly attractive. She was Irish, and possessed of all the witchery of glance, all the enchanting grace of movement, all the heart-subduing sweetness of manner, for which her countrywomen are always and everywhere distinguished. She was darkly, dangerously beautiful—too glittering to be good. Her beauty was that of a Circe—tempting to evil: there was something mystic, unholy in it. Could you imagine a spirit of the lower world assuming a face to ensnare men's souls withal? Hers was such an aspect.

I have said that from the first moment I saw her

I was resolved on her ruin ;—alas ! it was like a wolf resolving on the destruction of a constrictor serpent ! Yes ! while I was scheming how to effect my blind purpose, she had wound the fatal folds of her enchantment around me ; and, when she girded tighter the coil, I felt myself at her mercy. *I* was the ruined party.

For several months I scarcely ever left the house, there remaining continually in fascinating but fatal dalliance with her. My excuse to my father for neglecting the counting-room was illness ; and I am sure it was the truth : if I was not sick, then there is no such thing as sickness. She became to me as a superior creature—something to be worshipped, feared, prayed to, propitiated with offerings. I have known what it is to be under the influence of those strongest of passions, hatred and revenge, as you shall hear presently ; but, in their most energetic action on my thoughts and feelings, they were as nothing to the ardent, slavish love that bowed my spirit to the very dust before this woman. My father's money I lavishly bestowed upon her and her connexions ; and, as the books had fallen much behind through my neglect,—indisposition, as my father believed,—I found no diffi-



culty in establishing a cousin of hers, apparently a man of much acuteness, in the counting-house, as chief clerk. This was a measure which she had used all her blandishment to induce me to effect—well seconded by his cringing manner, and humble, poverty-stricken aspect.

But this was a trifle to the sacrifices she required from me: my very religion I changed to gratify her. She was a Roman Catholic, and I must become one too. A whispered sentence, a smile, and a kiss, overturned all the arguments of Calvin, Knox, and Zuingli. This was not so important a matter on the score of conscience, for I had never paid any great attention to matters of faith: but what would my father think—the bigoted sectarian? Worse—what would he do? Though I had never borne for him much reverence, I trembled as I renounced his creed. I knew I was putting in jeopardy my very bread. It was therefore with the utmost secrecy that I adopted and practised my new form of religion.

Shortly after this the priest to whom she brought me performed a clandestine ceremony of marriage between us, when I had, after most vehement prayers and protestations, obtained from her a tardy consent.

I thought that day the happiest of my life,—in very truth it was ; never did I drain such a cup of bliss ! I had been a gainer on the turf, in the cockpit, and in the bullring,—I had had runs of luck at cards, and days of rioting and merriment. Such were the highest pleasures I had previously known : when I thought on them, and compared them with the distracting joy of altogether possessing Ellen Lucas, I laughed in wonder and scorn at them, and those that had shared them with me.

I was intoxicated with my new delight : I almost altogether forsook the business ; whilst my peculations upon my father's money became so extensive and systematic as to excite his fears and suspicions, though they as yet rested upon no particular individual.

She was still staying as servant in the house. In the mean time the man Ormond, her relation, to whom I had given the situation of clerk, continued to rise higher and higher in my father's estimation. He was most devoted to his duty, regular in his habits, flatteringly attentive to the old man's whims and peculiarities—indeed, was the very *beau ideal* of a faithful servant, and soon acquired the complete and absolute confidence of his master.

Still, amid all this, my heart was haunted with continual doubts; my father must find out, sooner or later, my recent proceedings, and I trembled for the issue. I was altogether dependent upon him; not one morsel of bread could I earn by my own powers or resources. I knew intimately all the complicated processes of the distillery, but I had never applied the hand—indeed, my habits were altogether inconsistent with daily labour. If he were to cast me off, I should be a beggar; and she with whom I had promised to share the proceeds of our princely business!—love would spring from her bosom,—that love on which almost my existence now depended—and give place to the anger, the hatred, and all the bitterness with which poverty and want supplant the warmer affections.

But now the thought arose in my mind,—What if my father should die? Should not I be lord of this great trade, and able to pour thousands into her lap? I began to hope, to wish, and at last I determined on his end, and set coolly and systematically to think over it,—yes, procured books, medical and of other descriptions, studied them, and endeavoured to hatch in my mind some method of putting him secretly and unsus-

pectedly out of the way. You shudder! When you have seen a few more death-beds, you will take such a confession more coolly.

[I was much horrified by this most atrocious acknowledgment, and had unconsciously made some gestures indicative of this feeling. He saw my emotion, and sneered, as if pitying my ignorance of human nature. It seemed to render the unnatural villain desirous of adding yet more to the hideous interest of his account.]

Well, while this was going on, my father came into the house one afternoon, in a state of fearful excitement;—he had discovered all. Never before had I seen him in such a fury. He vehemently protested I could not be of his blood,—launched curses at me, my mother, and her relations; even her native district of country did not escape. Then he attacked me on account of my apostasy, as he called it—accused me of robbery of his money—vehemently asserted he would prosecute me: then, coming to my marriage, upbraided me with a number of sins I had no idea I was guilty of. He would not call by the name marriage any ceremony performed by a Catholic priest, but styled it cohabiting with a woman of abandoned character—



a servant—when he himself had arranged a match suitable for me, and proportioned to his rank in business. Finally, he loudly assured me that not a farthing of the fortune he had accumulated should ever go to support my paramour, myself, or one of my mother's blood. No ! he would go next day and make a will, disinheriting me, and would publish an advertisement in the newspapers renouncing all connexion with me.

But ere he had got this length, my passion had arisen, and now equalled his own. I accused him of hypocrisy, dishonesty, and cruel treatment of my mother. I told him I rejoiced to think her fame had been aspersed, and that there was a probability of my being no child of his.

Here he became perfectly frantic, struck me, rained blows upon me. I resisted—retaliated—in short, we had a regular fight, and he, being somewhat of the weakest, had the worst of it. He screamed for help, and the constables rushed in. Had they not, I verily believe I should have brought my career of crime to an earlier termination, for I saw a razor laid on the top of a glass over the chimney-piece, and had thought of dragging him *to it* across the floor.

[He made a long pause here. I may state that, during this latter part of the narration, the look of bodily suffering completely left his face, being supplanted by an expression of excited passion, evidently raised in his mind by the recollection of these events.]

As soon as he could speak articulately, he directed them to seize me ; and, while they held me fast, thrust me with his own hands out of the house. Immediately after, and while I yet stood almost crying with barked fury, and my face burning with shame, my wife was pushed out, lamenting and screaming, her chest being bundled out after her ; the door was shut, and there we stood together, among a large crowd that had collected, exposed to curiosity, compassion, wonder, or ridicule, according to the humours of the individuals composing it.

We found our way to a wretched lodging, with which, in my former days, my adventures had made me acquainted, and with the produce of some jewellery I had presented to her, and which was in her chest, managed to sustain life for some time.

Shortly after the above occurrences, I saw in a newspaper an advertisement signed by my father, informing

the public that all connexion between us had ceased ; and that for any debts contracted by me after that date he would not hold himself responsible.

Not long after, another appeared, stating that the spirit-manufacturing business hitherto conducted by Patrick Erris would in future be carried on under the firm of "Erris and Ormond," John Ormond having been admitted, as managing partner, into the concern. This last was signed severally—Philip Erris and John Ormond. When I read these announcements, I first perceived the full extent of the misfortune I had brought upon myself.

I went to Ellen, and with drooping spirits told her of the facts. A torrent of upbraiding was my reward, for I now began to find her wilful, spiteful, ill-humoured,—a perpetual scold : but, believe me as you may, not one whit had my passion for her abated ; her fatal power over me seemed rather to have increased. When she was out of temper I was miserable, and her smiles became only the more precious from their rarity.

Judge then of my state when I began to see her conduct, and evidently her feelings toward me, undergoing a rapid change. I was becoming indifferent to

her—my pipe was out, as they say ; somebody else had supplanted me in her affections. Long I endeavoured to blind myself to the fact ; but at last it became too palpable. I became jealous. Still my love fiercely burned for her ; but it was equalled by hatred of him, whoever he might be, whose image had thrown me into dark eclipse.

Gracious Heaven ! were you ever jealous of your wife, eh ? Oh, you don't know what it is ! I stated to her my fears and suspicions—she looked at me with contempt, and said nothing.

I became very wretched ; my spirits sank. Our funds, too, were now exhausted, and this added to the misery I felt. I never knew what this world was till I came to want money.

At once the thought rose in my mind, that, if plenty once more smiled upon us, her affection for me would be rekindled. I resolved to go back to my father, state my penitence, and, appealing to his natural affection, implore a restoration to his house, and to the station and prospects of his son. I did this, and you may know the strength of the motive that could induce me to undergo such a humiliation. I found him at the works. He appeared much



changed for the worse by the scenes that had occurred.

The moment he saw me, all his anger returned—a paroxysm of rage came upon him. I knelt to him, and prayed his forgiveness. I wept and grovelled on the earth in the abjectness of my entreaties—yes, in the presence of those workmen whom I had commanded as a master! His passion only increased. I turned to Ormond, who stood by, and, reminding him of what I had done for him, urged his intercession with my exasperated parent. But the villain only laughed at me, and looking, as he mocked, to the men, they joined with hootings in the ridicule, and speedily my father, with their assistance, seizing me, gave me in charge to a constable, and had me removed to the station-house, where I was confined forty-eight hours for drunkenness—for I really had taken a glass or so with the view of screwing up my nerves for the nonce, and to this account the magistrate laid the extravagance of my behaviour.

But, after all, the thing that most amazed me was the conduct of the scoundrel Ormond. I could not believe my own recollection.

Surely, thought I, I must have deceived myself:

he has been only acting ;—aware as he is of my father's temper, he has been only feigning this treatment of me in order not to lose his favour. No doubt he cherishes toward me the warmest feelings of gratitude, respect, and sympathy, and is continually endeavouring, in the way he deems most safe and suitable, to turn away the old man's wrath. I will seek him alone, and we will concoct together some plan for a reconciliation.

Two or three evenings after that, when hunger—positive want of food—had been added to my sufferings, I watched for him, and at length observed him, after seeing the large gates of the distillery locked, walk away along the dark and lone street in which it stood.

I met him, and going close to him wished him a good evening, and began immediately, and with perfect confidence, to remark upon the circumstances I have detailed. Stopping short, however, as we walked, he interrupted me.

“Hark ye, Philip,” said he, addressing me with contemptuous familiarity ; “I say it at once and for all, and pray keep mind of it for the future—I desire to have nothing to say to you, and nothing to do with

you. It is not probable I shall require your interest with the old gentleman any further. My income as junior partner, though only a sixth of the net returns, is amply comfortable just now, especially as I have in prospect the goodwill—you understand—and possibly something more: lucky fellow! eh? But now, good evening. Don't annoy me. Give my kind love to Ellen Lucas when you see her next; tell her I hope she has not forgotten her old man."

At the beginning of this speech I thought he was in jest, but soon I saw the truth. But what—what means that last insinuation? Would he have me believe that any one—that *he*?—oh, madness! As the idea swelled and took form in my mind, I became perfectly frantic. I sprang at his throat, almost blinded with fury, and actually fastened on him with my teeth.

But he was a great heavy fellow, more than six feet in height, and as strong as an ox. He shook me off, and with a light cane he carried rained lashes on my face and shoulders. I stood up before him unwincingly. I would not have called for help or have turned to escape from him for a world. After a

minute of this, down I dropped in a dead faint, partly from the pain of the cuts, partly from excess of impotent rage.

It appeared he walked quietly away. As for me, I had fallen with my head in the kennel, and the cold water from the street, running along, speedily restored me to activity. I started up and skulked home.

I saw at once that, as far as frame went, he was much my superior. As this thought rose in my mind I laughed in my heart as I set my mind to scheme up some deep plan of retaliation, in which I did not care if I was myself involved, provided only my desire of vengeance was fully glutted.

But the wormwood was in the treatment I now received from her. Every object of mine that she could thwart she did; every word she contradicted, whilst she made me a subject of continual vituperation and ridicule to the wretched associates with whom our misery made us herd; and her murmuring and repining never ceased. This from any indifferent person would have been intolerable; from her, toward whom my vehement love had as yet suffered no abatement, it was distracting. I flew for relief to my old consola-



tion—liquor; and, for a while, I became a street pest, continually wandering drunk about the town, hooted by boys—an object of public sport and contempt.

At length, when I had been confined to hard labour in the house of correction and been kept tolerably sober for a day or two, I reflected that this was never the way to accomplish what was now the great object of my existence. I made a firm resolution to keep as free from spirits as, considering my habits, I possibly could, and on leaving the prison proceeded to carry the plan into effect.

But when I left it a complicated piece of news burst upon me:—

My father, it was stated, had had his reason so far impaired as to require seclusion in an asylum for the insane, which was no doubt to be accounted for from my conduct and its accompanying circumstances. This was quite possible, I make no doubt; for the behaviour of his whole previous life had been such as to indicate a constitutional tendency to mental disorder—which probably, by the way, you may think I have inherited from him. But a striking particular was, that the whole business was in the uncontrolled hands

of Mr. Ormond, into which also the proceeds were flowing.

It was curious to hear the opinions of people that knew us. My father's madness was admitted on all hands, as also my own; indeed, I was given to understand that my proceedings had given a considerable bias to the opinions of the doctors whose certificates had authorized his confinement. We were a pitied family, and Mr. Ormond met with every commendation for his steadiness, rectitude, and business activity. I was also informed that he had at one time expressed his intention of having me too subjected to judicial inspection, and, if possible, despatched to the same quarters.

All this,—moreover, that my father was in a very dangerous state, and not expected to survive,—was told me by the keeper of a whisky-cellar, from whom I had been in the habit of getting my small daily supplies, and whose house was of course the first place I sought on being set at large.

On leaving this I set off homeward, if the hole I had harboured in could be called by such a name. As I went I reflected on, and was amazed at, the singular run of luck that had blessed this most

consummate scoundrel Ormond, who had thus in a few months found his way to fortune over the necks of his benefactors. With my mind filled with working thoughts, I slunk along through lanes and alleys, toward the place where I had left Ellen on the day of my imprisonment. As I drew near the place I began to conjecture, to hope, to be anxious, to dread. What was I to expect—joy at my return, pity for my misfortunes, upbraiding for my misconduct?—or could anything have happened to her in my absence?

I entered the house. She was not there! I inquired when she would be: a loud laugh was the reply; and when it ceased I was told she had gone to stay with a gentleman. A gentleman! I staggered back as if I had been struck on the head, while my heart whispered the name—*Ormond*, but my tongue was silent. I could not speak—I turned round and left the place.

It was getting late in the evening, and almost unconsciously I took my way towards his house. On my arrival there I found a hackney-carriage drawn up opposite the door. Presently out they came together, —yes, there she was, leaning on *his* arm! My eyes were riveted on her as he led her forth, beaming in

her strange beauty, bright as when she first seduced me, and decked out in splendid apparel and ornaments. Oh, doctor, doctor ! the thought of that sight yet maddens me, though twenty years have passed since then !

The first regular theatre we have had in this town had just been completed and was that night to be opened, and they were on their way to the scene. They both saw me as they crossed the pavement. He laughed, and motioned her to look at me ; while she, my wife, affected to turn away and hang down her head.

I was frantic : I cannot describe to you the feelings that settled in my mind. Hatred—jealousy—not that fantastic emotion built on trifles light as air, but the dread passion of one who knows—who with his eyes sees himself betrayed : these—mingled with intense, unquenchable, and sorrowing, supplicating love to her, even now, and with bitter self-condemnation—filled my bosom. I felt my heart, as it were, swelling and rising up in my throat ! Oh, how it beat, as my eye moved and rested on him ! My first impulse was to attack him ; but it was useless—he had ten times my strength, and I would only be exposing myself to new



contumely, and in *her* presence. Would you believe it?—all I did was to stand and grin at him—make faces at him—upon my soul. I could not help it: my whole frame was quivering with the emotion I was suppressing. They entered the carriage and drove away.

That night I committed my first theft. I had been guilty of cheating at cards and other games before, but this was my first case of regular stealing. With the proceeds I bought a pistol at an old-iron stall, and some powder, and procured leaden slugs by cutting fragments from the rain-pipes on the walls of houses. Having ascertained that the weapon was trustworthy, I lay in wait for them as they emerged from the theatre.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and they walked towards his house. I shrank in the shadow behind them and listened. They were talking and laughing together. At length, watching my opportunity, I crept up close behind them. I raised the pistol and pointed it at the back of his head: he was not two feet in advance of it. I slipped my finger to the trigger, and was about to pull.

“Strange!” thought I, “revenge is not such a sweet

thing as I thought. What, shall an instantaneous death compensate for the mighty wrong he has wrought to me ?”

My arm dropped to my side, and I stood stock still, looking after them, as, gradually increasing their distance, they moved away from me, all unconscious of my neighbourhood.

Next day I sought employment as a working distiller—with difficulty obtained it. I did not, however, long preserve it: my habits of idleness and intoxication were altogether inconsistent with it, and I was dismissed from the work. This being the case, my last resource was to join with some old connexions of my dog-fighting days, and commence the manufacture of potyeen among the hills. There were nearly a dozen of us in the gang, and we carried on the thing in the most systematic manner, occasionally diversifying the pursuit by a little smuggling through the Isle of Man into England—more frequently by fishing and shooting.

Some of us had followed the employment from our boyhood, but most were broken-down characters like myself, who took to it for their bread, but especially to be sure of a continual and plentiful supply of spirits.

My knowledge of the processes, as conducted on a large scale, was decidedly an acquisition, and I speedily acquired much influence in the party. Our apparatus was of the simplest description, light, and easily removed, for we had no fixed place of working, but shifted about as occasion demanded.

It was a week here, and ten days there ; now in an old barn, now in a hut in the middle of a bog ; anon in some lonely cave, in the mountains, or among the rocks of the shore ; but always within a convenient distance from this town, where the chief market of our produce lay.

The prime seat of the manufacture, previous to my joining, had been the ruins of an old castle, about eighteen or twenty miles from the town, and a couple or so from the sea-coast. One tower of it only remained standing, the rest being a heap of masses of stone and mortar. Beneath this tower was a large, low-roofed vault, whose only proper vent was a square trap in the arch, through which you descended into it. In order, however, to admit a current of air for their furnaces, they had dug a hole through the thickness of the wall, which opened on the outside, close to the edge of a stream, and covered by brushwood and ivy.



This vault, however, was found to be so damp as materially to interfere with the delicate processes necessary, as well as with the health of the operatives, some of whom caught their deaths there ; and, finally, though admirably adapted in so far as concealment went, it was abandoned.

When I had been a few days connected with the set we found it most advantageous to ply the trade at an old mill which had been for some years in disuse. It is situated at a place called the Mill Hole, a wild spot on the coast, about twenty miles from here.

This place possessed peculiar points of merit. It was surrounded landward by miles of mountainous, almost uninhabited moorland. A stream, coming from the hills, found its way to the sea beside it, washing its walls ; and among the rocks through and over which it gushed were innumerable crevices, most suitable for concealment. Moreover, the sea, hard by, afforded every convenience for the transport of our commodities ; and, possessed of all these advantages, we soon began to extend our speculations, and shortly attracted the attention of the authorities of this town.

Several licensed distillers formed a society for the suppression of the illicit trade, and kept a very high



reward continually advertised for the conviction of offenders. The secretary of this society, and he whose name was affixed to the placards offering the reward, was no other than my old acquaintance Mr. Ormond, of the firm of Erris and Ormond.

But we were not very apprehensive of any immediate danger, as our agent in the town had especially informed us that we were not at all suspected. This person proved to be a traitor: the temptation of the reward was too strong for him; and he betrayed the whole concern to Ormond, who immediately communicated with the high sheriff of the county.

The result was that, early one morning, as a man named Quin and myself were engaged within the old mill, he, who was lying along upon the ground, thought he heard it vibrate with a heavy tread. We thought this might be the rest of our crew, who had gone up to the tower for some grain, having with them a light rickety cart or car with which we used to transport materials; but, on listening further, we perceived a regular measured step, as of soldiers on the march. We ran out, and about a couple of hundred yards off saw a party of military, accompanied by two civilians. One of these was an excise-officer; the other was

Ormond, in his capacity of secretary of the protection society.

The instant they saw us they quickened their pace into a run. Ormond recognised me. I saw him pointing me out with violent gesticulations to the officer that accompanied him. He was mounted on a blood-horse (an exceedingly beautiful and spirited animal), and immediately gave chase to us.

I stood for a moment looking at him, my blood boiling with astonishment, hatred, and rage: the next moment, however, the instinct of self-preservation overcame these feelings, and, turning, I ran rapidly after Quin towards the shore, close to which we had a small hooker moored. We rushed into the sea, and swam off, using our utmost exertions. Ormond came galloping up ere we had made three strokes from the beach. Enraged at our escape, he made furious attempts to urge his horse yet after us: the animal, however, refusing to take the water, stopped short, reared, kicked, and finally threw him among the sand. He had preserved his grasp of the reins, and, immediately springing up, began whipping the beast with great violence.

As soon as we got on board the hooker we cast off

the line that attached it to its grapnel, and rowed out with all speed to sea. When we had reached a safe distance we lay upon our oars, to watch their proceedings. We saw them first read over, probably by way of form, one or two papers, and immediately after they fell to work and demolished our whole apparatus.

All this while Ormond was riding about the mill, interfering, directing, and making himself the busiest of all, appearing to be exulting in his work with a devilish glee.

And there was I, lying inactive on my oar, a spectator from a distance, while my last means of earning my bread were being annihilated by him who had already robbed me of every other thing—station, wealth, love! What could I have done to him that, not content with this, he should pursue me still with such rancour—persecute me with such exterminating malignity? I had raised him from the very dunghill, and sent him to my own place. Oh, ingratitude! most mortal of the sins that sink men's souls! surely from the smoke of the bottomless pit didst thou draw the deep dye that blackens thy hideous front!

I felt as if struck dumb. While Quin, my companion, shrieked oaths and maledictions at them across

the water, I remained mute and calm, looking on,—but the state of my thoughts during that fearful time ! It was as if my whole mind were not an aggregate of faculties, as you philosophers will have it, but one single dread passion, *revenge* ! My heart beat slowly and laboriously—there seemed to be a dull heavy mass weighing down my bosom—my skin felt cold—I actually shivered. Then, in the silent thoughts of my own heart, I prayed to the fiend, that I felt was there at the time, that he would glut me to the teeth with vengeance, though I should perish with the surfeit.

At length, as the work of destruction continued in the ruin, a large quantity of spirits appeared to have caught fire : they were the firstlings, or products of the first distillation, containing a large quantity of essential oil. The burst of flame was sudden, loud, and very bright, flashing through the small windows and crevices of the old building. Thereupon Ormond's horse, wild with fright, darted from the building, and flew madly up hillwards from the shore. In vain he attempted to rein or manage it ; it bore him furiously on ; and they disappeared behind a rising ground, while we could hear the rapid sounds of the galloping



lessening, growing faint, but not slower, in the distance. The excise officer rode a short way after him, but soon turned and came back alone.

Shortly after, having completed the destruction of the still, they marched in a body away along the shore, in the direction of the highway to this town, which passed about three or four miles distant.

As soon as we were satisfied of our safety, we rowed ashore and landed. On going to the mill we found everything broken or burnt, not a stave of a tub remained entire. With heavy hearts we left the place, embarked again, and reached a quiet cove, a couple of miles down the shore; here we drew our boat up on the beach beside the houses of some fishermen that we knew, and went up the country towards the tower.

On reaching this ruin, what was our surprise to find Ormond's horse standing among the fragments of building, tied to a stone, and dripping with perspiration! A loud sound of altercation reached our ears from the inner part of the tower, and presently out rushed two or three of our band, and immediately, with eager exultation, informed us that Ormond's horse had borne him to the immediate vicinity, where it had terminated its race by falling to the ground.

They had immediately secured both the horse and its master, and the latter was now fast in the vault below, where formerly our still had been wrought.

When I heard this, the blood gushed to my head ; I grew dizzy ; I could hardly see ; my heart beat with bursting force and rapidity ; I could not speak ; I felt a strong impulse to drop upon my knees and return thanks to some superior power—not of heaven, certainly—for delivering him into our hands.

Not so Quin : partly by hurried speech, partly by signs, he gave them to understand the total destruction of our stills at the Mill Hole, and the active share in it of this our prisoner. The old building echoed with cries of execration, shouts of triumph, and for immediate vengeance. There were eight, every one excited almost to madness ; but what was *their* joy, their fury, or their thirst for vengeance to mine ?

We had a hurried consultation how we should proceed.

“Let me see him,” cried I ; “let me be sure of him. Bring him to look me in the face !”

Two of them immediately jumped into the vault and pushed him up through the trap. His hands and feet had been tied, and, as they thrust him up into the

light, he struggled much to avoid the sharp edges of the stones. As his head and chest appeared through the aperture, and while his eyes were yet blinded with the sudden change from darkness to bright light, Quin rushed to him, and dashed his fist with his whole force into his face. He fell back with a loud cry upon those below, but he was again pushed up, while the rest held Quin back. He was set upon his feet, and our boys dispersed from about him.

As soon as he saw me standing before him, his face, which had before been pale with fear, grew actually greenish-yellow in colour. He trembled violently, his knees knocked together, and he staggered; presently a flow of blood gushed to his face, and the red, mingling with the yellow, produced a livid, lurid hue, a satisfying indication of the thoughts that were passing in his mind.

I stood and glared at him with all the luxury of triumphant animosity: then, going close to him—

“Now,” I cried, “now you”—

[Here the narrator came out with a torrent of most ghastly imprecations, altogether unsuitable for any pages.]

“Now, whose hands are you in? Whose turn is it

now? What have you to expect? How have you served me? Hearken, now, you black-hearted Judas, that betrayed your master—think over all that you have done to me, and reflect that, with help from ——, I will take the full equivalent of it out of your body! Before another sun rises, *you will be murdered!* I will have revenge! Do you know what *that* is?”

In this way I continued to rave in his ears, till, in a paroxysm of fear, he turned to the rest, and, imploring compassion, offered them rewards and immunity from the law if they would seize me and allow him to escape. But they laughed at him. Then he tried to intimidate us, telling us that, if any violence were offered him, we should dearly pay the penalty; but, finding this to be of as little avail, he dared to appeal to me—to promise me a sum of money and a passage out of the country if I would be his friend, and intercede with my comrades for him!

I was amazed.

“What!” cried I; “you have robbed me of everything a man can have in this world—home, rank, wealth, and love. You are inhabiting my house, spending my fortune, filling my station in society,



paramour of my wife ! Yes, you most villanous of traitors—you have driven me to what I am ! You have scoffed at me, whipped me, persecuted me to death, for no cause : and *now*, when I have you in my power, would it not be sweet revenge to take a few pounds of my own money, and go away from you out of the country ?”

He remained speechless, and again the yellow tinge overspread his face as we seized upon him, and, stifling his vain screams for mercy and help, put him down once more into the vault, and, laying a broad flat stone over the trap, heaped others upon it, to make assurance doubly sure.

We then entered into a consultation together with regard to his fate. We were unanimous in resolving on his death, and it was proposed to toss up who should despatch him. This I immediately volunteered—they would scarcely hear of it, insisting that the danger should be equally shared. But when I sued and prayed them to consider my wrongs and grant me this satisfaction—when I told them the story I have told you, though many of them doubted that such things could be, and considered me at least exaggerating, yet my pleading was allowed, and it was

agreed that I should do the deed, while Quin offered to stand by me, in case he should prove too much for one.

For themselves, the plan was this : They were to go off, collect four or five days' provision and water for the hooker, and settle their affairs in this country, for even they had much to settle on so short a notice. This done, Quin was to be sent to inform me that all was ready for our escape, when we should, immediately on completing our purpose, flee to a certain place on the coast where they were to be waiting, embark with them, and make sail for the coast of England, there to lurk till the noise of the affair should blow over.

For all that night and next day I kept watch within the ruin, sometimes going to look after the horse, or for food or drink, but mostly sitting on the pile of stones over the entrance to the vault, in which I could often indistinctly hear him stirring about.

When the second night came round, Quin came to inform me they were all ready with the hooker. Thereupon, with stern and silent alacrity, we commenced removing the stones from over the trap, and, lighting a splint of bog-pine, jumped down together.

To our amazement, Ormond was not to be seen.

There lay the cord with which his hands and feet had been bound, but where was he? The question was immediately resolved. The vent which I have said we constructed to cause a current of air for the still-fires, this he had discovered; and, with the help of an old reaping-hook he had found, wherewith also he had cut the cords, had enlarged it from a few inches to several feet in size.

This was not so difficult, for the damp had regularly sapped the wall, and the great, angular, ill-built stones would come away, in the hands of a strong man, with much readiness. Our attention was directed to it by hearing a sound of violent struggling, and, on darting across the vault to where the aperture gaped, we found within it the body of our prisoner. His head was outside the wall, which was here about eight feet in thickness, and his shoulders had stuck fast in the outer opening, which, owing to the mortar being hard and firm, from proximity to the air, he could not so easily enlarge. With a wild shout of joy we caught hold of his heels and drew him gradually in, securing him the while by binding the cord firmly around his limbs.

Though much spent with hunger and thirst, and the

labour of excavating the old wall, still he struggled much and violently, and would yet have been a match for either of us singly, but in the hands of both it was unavailing; and at last, flushed and covered with perspiration, his eyes wildly glancing, his heart beating, and his breath panting, he lay on the floor of the vault, his ankles and knees bound firmly together, and his hands twisted and tied behind his back.

We waited a minute or so. As we stood, Quin, wiping the moisture from his brow, whispered me—

“Hadn’t we better do it here?”

Ormond heard this and trembled excessively; then, in a low whining voice, he implored us to have mercy upon him; then, breaking out suddenly, with a voice that made the vault and the whole ruin ring, screamed “Murder!” but, kicking the iron-shod toe of my brogue into his mouth, I put an abrupt stop to this.

“No,” said I, in reply to Quin, “I have a plan of my own. Let’s hoist him out of the vault.”

Thereupon, seizing him, we dragged him, vainly kicking and wriggling his corded limbs, up through the trap into the cold air of night, and finally, outside the ruin.

“Now,” said I to my comrade, “go and fetch me,



first, the cart, and put it here, then bring out his horse; you will find it tied to a stump close to Brian's arch.

He did so, I, the while, standing over my victim, who groaned deeply, but did not speak. When the horse was brought out, with the help of Quin I proceeded to yoke him to the car, and effected it, though with very great difficulty, from the spirit of the animal, and his ignorance of those who were handling him. Having completed this, we placed Ormond in the cart, bound as he was, and, springing up in front and catching up the reins,—

“Now, Quin,” said I, “that is all I want from you; look out for yourself; off with you to the hooker, and tell them that, if I don't come to them before sunrise, they may shove off, and leave me to my luck.”

Upon that, allowing the horse to go forward, we moved on, and Quin, standing for a little to look after us, plunged into the darkness, and was off.

As soon as Ormond saw himself alone in the cart with me, his first proceeding was another powerful but unavailing struggle to free his limbs. When I saw this, taking out my knife, I gave him a small cut in the throat, and told him that the next struggle that he

made it should go deeper. This had the desired effect, and he lay quiet and motionless.

Presently, in a state of mortal fear, he began,—

“Young master” (by the way, this was the title by which I was addressed formerly by my father’s workmen, and which this same wretch had always used to me when he was a clerk in the counting-house)—“young master, for Heaven’s sake what are you going to do with me? You won’t slaughter me, surely, tied like a sheep? Oh, master dear, have mercy on me!”

“This is a nice horse of yours, Jack; what may you have given for such a tit?”

“Thirty-five guineas, Master Philip. Now, won’t you be merciful? oh, spare me! I have wronged you dreadfully, I own it! Oh, how it weighs upon my soul now! But I’ll do anything—”

“Now, Jack,” said I again, “what would you think of having one leg tied to the stump of a tree that I’m driving to, up the moor here, and this nice horse of yours yoked to the other?”

I felt his shudder make the wood of the light cart shake perceptibly, while a deep groan of horror broke from him.

“Oh, spare me, master, spare me! I have ruined you, I confess;—it was the devil that led me—!”

“Did you not continually stir my father up against me?” cried I, my hasty passion rising fast to fury.

“I did, I did. Oh, for mercy!”

“Did you not betray to him my marriage with *her*?”

“Oh, Heaven help me, yes, Philip, master dear! Don't take my life!”

“Did you not scheme to ruin me, when I had been the making of you?—did you not mock me?—did you not lash me?—did you not take my birthright?—did you not take the wife of my bosom?”

Here my passion deprived me of the power of speech, my voice ending in a fierce guttural cry.

“Oh, Heaven reward your kind, trusting heart, Mr. Erris! I confess I have been worse than a fiend to you: but have mercy! I will give you a share in the trade—”

A loud laugh of derision burst from me.

“I will burn your father's will—I will assign back to you the whole property,—only let me live, Master Philip, darling: don't murder me! I will have him

taken from the asylum where he is dying: he cannot come out except through me. Spare me!"

"Spare you! Will Heaven spare me for the deep sins you have driven me to—your murder among the rest?"

"Oh pardon, pardon! you may be happy yet, Master Philip. I will restore everything, every jot, every farthing. I will serve you for life—be your slave. Oh, for the love of God in Heaven, don't kill me!"

"Tell me," said I, suppressing my emotions, "why did Ellen leave me for you?"

"Oh, young master, dear, if I tell you the truth will you have mercy?"

"Ask mercy of him whose affair it is, if you think he will give it to such a fiend incarnate. Answer my question, or I will despatch you this instant."

He started abruptly in the cart.

"I knew her before she became your father's servant. She lived with me before ever you saw her. It was all a scheme to better ourselves. She gave me the money you gave her, and I lived upon it. We were not relations. Now will you let me go with my life, Mr. Philip? You see I am too despicable for your vengeance."



I stopped the horse and jumped from my seat, and, taking hold of him, drew him from the cart to the ground.

“Enough,” said I; “*I have it all now.*”

The deep, husky, unnatural sound of my voice as I said this struck terror to his heart. We had stopped close by a small tarn, or mountain lake, which lay with its black waters glassy and still, dimly palpable to the eye, in the thick, cold, moonless night,—looking like a deadly snake, coiled up and motionless, but with its fatal eye glancing upon you.

“Oh!” cried he, “do not throw me in there, tied up in this way, dear Master Erris. It is horrible. Any death but such! Oh, will you, will you spare me? I will make restitution of every farthing—I will publicly acknowledge my villany—I will submit myself to any punishment the law may inflict. I will—I swear before that God that sees us two, whom I believe in, and dread to meet! I will go with you to the high sheriff, and confess my fraud; and not one word of this night will I ever breathe to ear of mortal! I can do no more, Mr. Philip. Now won’t you, won’t you? I will take any oath to this. Oh! won’t you let me live?”

He was on his knees, bending forward his body, and looking upward in a supplicating posture, while the tears streamed over his face. I stood looking at him for a while. Now I knew what revenge was: this was something like it—not as on the night when I might have shot him, unknown, in the dark street. His hands were fast behind his back, and his legs encircled with the rope, from the knees to the ankles. There he knelt before me, utterly helpless; now looking at me, and now taking a glance at the dim, dark, silent pool below.

“Oh, my good young master!” he continued, “what’s the use of killing me? I could make you all you ever were. I swear I will do it; only I must live! I cannot die,—I dare not. *I shall be damned, —I feel it—oh, mercy, mercy!*”

In these last words his voice rose to a wild, maniacal cry of agonizing terror, while he twisted about, and danced upon his knees, in the extremity of his dread and anxiety. Approaching him, I bound a rope firmly around each ankle, and, passing them rapidly under the cart, tied his feet fast to the axle, with his face downwards. All the while he continued hurried prayers for mercy, protestations, and piercing cries of

despair. Springing again to my place in front of the cart, I gave the rein to the horse, and it moved. I heard his head and face, as, hanging down, they were dragged along, go knock, knock, on the stony hill-side; whilst his shrieks rang and echoed far away across the untrodden moorland.

I was now in a frenzy of excitement; the horse broke into a trot, a canter, a furious gallop, as, screaming, "Now—now you have it; this is indeed revenge,—full, glorious revenge!—now!—now!—now!"—I lashed the animal into madness. Presently the thick and murky night broke up; there were lightning, several peals of thunder, and a deluging fall of rain. The poor horse was furious. On it flew like the wind, while I clung to the cart, whipping it now on the one side, now on the other, with frantic violence.

In this way we dashed along for about three miles, when one of the wheels went to pieces. I was thrown to the ground, and the horse, after staggering on a few paces, fell among the stones, and lay on its side, struggling and kicking, smashing the remains of the cart, and the mutilated body of Ormond. All this while the rain continued to fall by bucketfuls.

I sprang up, considerably bruised, but with my bones

all sound, and that was enough for me. My first proceeding was to cut the rope-harness that bound the horse to the fragments of the cart: having accomplished this, I managed to get him upon his feet, where he stood trembling and drooping his head. Securing him to the sound wheel by the halter, I proceeded to search for and examine the body of my victim, which was scarcely to be recognised, from the horrible mutilations it had undergone.

I now began to scheme how I should dispose of the shattered remains of my enemy: a moment, and my purpose was formed. Catching the rope that tied the legs, I dragged it round to where the horse stood. As I came close with it, he snuffed the air, and started, tugging at the halter with all his force. Seeing this, I bound a handkerchief over his eyes, and with a little difficulty succeeded in fixing it across his back. Jumping up behind it, I spurred towards the sea, and, after half an hour's gallop, reached the place where the hooker lay.

I found them waiting, all in readiness. My account they heard without a word of observation. We took the body on board, and, turning the horse adrift to seek a new master where he could find one, shoved off



and made sail across the Irish Channel. When about half way, we threw the body overboard, along with the clothes I had worn that night, and two days afterwards made the Welsh coast.

We immediately sold our boat and dispersed : some went to labour at a great public work that was then in progress, others went to the harvest in England and Scotland ; for my part, I became a wanderer over the face of the world for twenty years. During that time I had a taste of all the services—military, naval, and East Indian ; but my adventures during that time have little to do with the story I am telling you—besides, I am afraid I will hardly have time to finish it.

Well, about a couple of months ago I found myself once more on Irish ground. I was then one of a gipsy party, and we had just crossed from Scotland to Belfast, along with the crowds of reapers returning from the Scotch harvest, or shearing, as it is called. We travelled southward ; and, as we drew near this town, I proposed to my brethren of the gang that we might commence distilling. This was not so much on account of the gain to be got by the trade, but in order that I might have always a ready supply of that

stuff without which life was now to me an unendurable torment.

The proposal was eagerly adopted, and we set about procuring a suitable apparatus immediately. On coming to this town to buy tin-plate wherewith to construct it (for we all understood tinplate-working in a degree), I was struck with the appearance of a woman I saw ballad-singing in the streets. She sang beautifully ; and this, added to the remains, very perceptible, of great beauty, drew her abundance of encouragement. It was herself—Ellen Lucas ! Thereupon the single and potent passion I had formerly borne for her, and which still throughout my long wanderings had filled my dreams, returned in all its vehemence.

Yes ! though she had betrayed me, I never hated her ! my curses and my revenge were directed, not toward her, but against her accomplice, Ormond : and now, how I could have blessed the gentleman I saw showering coppers into her bag ! She frequented the more aristocratic streets of the town, and seemed to find it profitable to cultivate an appearance of faded gentility—of one who had seen better days.

When I spoke to her and mentioned my name she

was struck dumb. She plainly knew me ; yet she went away with me where I led, without speaking a word. After a while, however, she recovered herself, and professed herself overjoyed to meet me. A long course of accusation, argument, and recrimination ensued ; which ended, as you will not be surprised to learn, if you are at all experienced, in my once more becoming the dupe of this Delilah.

Her connexion with Ormond before our marriage she denied ; and, though I knew she was lying, I took her word. Her after connexion with him she excused on account of her poverty. She was starving and without a lodging ; he offered her her former home, and she accepted it. All this I took from her as valid ; and had she offered no excuse at all it would have been the same thing. I was infatuated.

She was anxious to know what had become of Ormond. His horse, she informed me, had been found several weeks after his disappearance, in the possession of some travelling hawkers, to whom, however, no connexion with him could be brought home. They stated they had found it grazing in a sequestered nook among the moors, and brought forward proof that they were in quite a different part of the country

at the time implicated. With a strange delight I detailed to her the true account of his end. She listened in silence, and without comment.

It was now agreed between us that she should adopt my way of life ; and she forthwith did so, and became one of our gang. A most useful member, too, she proved to be. With a bottle of spirits under her shawl she used to go about from house to house, in a quiet, stealthy way, giving the people glasses by way of trial, and making whispered bargains for the disposal of gallons of the same stuff.

By this means we were rapidly drawing around us a profitable connexion. Our still was set a-going in the identical vault I have described : the tower was much changed in other parts, but the vault remained the same. Here I was constantly employed—the rest of our gang going about as gipsies, stealing grain, potatoes, and other materials, and also selling, when they could, the manufactured produce.

One day, while I was thus employed, and sitting watching in a state of dreamy half-intoxication, I heard several voices speaking low and whispering about the ruin. This gave me no concern, for I distinctly heard my wife's voice, and I concluded it



must be the rest of our band. There was much talking; presently the sound approached the mouth of the vault.

“Bless me, how strong it smells!” said a strange voice; and there was a sound of sniffing.

I was alarmed, and instantly on the alert.

“There, that is the trap, that square hole there!” said the voice of Ellen Lucas: “it’s only four feet deep—but look sharp when you jump down, for he is a devil!”

I immediately saw what an egregious dupe I had been. Here was I caught like a badger in his hole; yet I determined to give them the double again. “And as for that arch-traitress,” said I—and the rest was thought, not spoken.

Springing across the vault to the place behind the still where was the vent in the wall, I crept into it, with the view of making my way to the outside; but close to the outer aperture a large stone had slipped from the upper part—the roof, you know, of the hole—and impeded my escape. Instantly—for I heard them descending through the trap—instantly I put my shoulder against it, and, lying upon my front, I thrust my heels against projecting stones on each side,

and bore my whole force against it. One strong shove, and it shook; the next—it gave way; but that instant I felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen upon and split me. The wall had fallen in upon me! the vent was filled up, and I lay in the bottom of it, crushed with tons of hard stone above my broken body! The agony was excruciating—my back was broken in several places I knew. Oh, the weight—the murderous weight—of these mighty stones crushing my very bones to powder!—I feel them now!—they are hot—red-hot!—ah! Ormond, you hound!—will you heap them on me?—will you—will you—ah—a—a—ah——

A quantity of fluid bubbled from his mouth, a convulsive grin passed across his face, a strange indefinable change came over his black, staring eyes, and I knew he was dead.

I turned abruptly round, and beheld the soldier standing behind me, with his terror-bleached face in vivid contrast to his red coat and glittering accoutrements. He had come into the room from the ward without, hearing the voice of his prisoner in continuous talking, and, pausing behind the door, had heard nearly the whole narrative.

“ Well, sir,” said he to me, “ did you ever hear the like of that ? Them two—that is, this here and the other chap—must have been a pair of the dreadfullest villains—”

“ Yes, my good man, they form two very excellent instances—the one of villany from ungoverned passion, the other from depraved and perverted judgment. But you don’t understand these things.”

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## CHAPTER XIX.



## VOICES FROM THE DEEP.—A YARN.

WE were somewhere off Cape d'Agulhas, on our homeward voyage from the Mauritius, fighting hard against a head wind, which, though not quite a gale, was yet sufficiently provoking. There was a nasty short cross sea too, and not the mile-long rolling swell you usually meet with in that quarter of the world, for the wind had suddenly changed. It was bitterly cold, and there was no lack of rain, nor of sleet either ; and as you walked the deck, you would occasionally, among the soft, cold, squashy slipperiness, feel a big hailstone crunch under your shoe, by way of variety. Now, as I was never very partial to the above sort of circumstances, I was making myself as comfortable as I could below, with a glass of cold grog and some old



sheets of the *Bell's Life in London* comicalities, when one of the boys, scrambling down the ladder, shoved open the sliding-door of the cabin, thereby admitting a gust of cold air that made me shiver.

“Well, what do you want?” said I.

“If you please, sir, the captain’s compliments, would you come upon deck?—there’s a funonymon.”

“Oh, is there?—the Flying Dutchman, I shoudn’t wonder—we are just about his cruising-ground now.”

And hastily putting on somebody’s pea-jacket, and somebody else’s hard-a-weather hat, I clambered on deck and looked around me. Everything was dark and cold, though it had ceased to rain, and the quarter-deck and gangways had been swept. The sky seemed one mass of sooty black clouds, and you could not tell, from any indication of your eyes, whether it was vaulted, or flat as the ceiling of your room—all was blackness, shapelessness, and obscurity. The sea had a sort of dull, grayish appearance, from the mixture over its surface of white foam and pitchy water; there was nothing bright or phosphorescent about it; it was cold, dreary, and dispiriting; and the heavily-laden little brig plunged, and seemed to shake her shoulders, and plunge again, as if she had no particular relish for it herself; while

at every shrug a shower of spray was blown aft, falling in big splashy drops upon the deck. As I was thus appreciating the full comfortlessness of the scene, the same boy addressed me, telling me the captain was forward, on the weather-side of the forecastle. I immediately began to clapperclaw my way forward, holding on now by one thing, now by another, for she pitched so violently, that I was momentarily expecting to be chucked clean overboard. At length I brought up alongside the skipper, who, standing on a hen-coop, and holding on by the weather-shrouds, was peering anxiously out to windward.

“Do you hear that?—did you hear anything?” said he, suddenly turning to me.

“Nothing,” said I, “but the moaning of the wind in the rigging, and the pile-driving thumps of her bows.”

“Ah!—hush — not a word — listen — there it is again!”

“Where?” said I.

“Right out in the direction of my hand there—don’t you hear that?”

“By Heaven, I hear a voice!—there again!” Here there was a lull, and we all distinctly heard it. It

was a long, mournful cry, and had in its sound something inexpressibly harrowing. It seemed the voice of a strong man, exhausted in mind and body, weakened to a womanish state of feeling, by hunger, exposure, misery, and despair; calling for help without hope to find it. It was actually musical, and had in its prolonged melancholy cadence something so acutely touching as to make me experience a feeling precisely similar to that I used to have in my childhood, just when at the point of falling away into a fit of crying. We all stood entranced and motionless, listening till its dying fall was lost in the rush of the wind and dash of the waves.

“The Lord look to that poor soul, anyhow!” said a hoarse voice behind me, but in a tone of much feeling. I turned, and saw it was one of the crew, who were clustered, some forward at the heel of the bowsprit, and the others farther aft, round the head of the long-boat; everybody was on deck, and all had heard the cry, and were making whispering remarks, which, being to the windward, I could not distinctly hear.

Again the wind lulled, and again the long mournful “hillo—o—o” swelled and sank upon our ears.

“It is broad abeam of us now, sir,” said the mate.

“Yes,” said the master, “it must be drifting down with the current. Can any of you see anything?” But no one answered. “Here, you Tom Bradley, jump aft in the gangway, and answer their hail, whoever they are.”

The young man, who had a remarkably loud and clear voice, went aft, mounted into the weather main rigging, and immediately a trumpet-like “hillo-hoy!” rang over the water. A minute, and it was answered by the same mournful call; but this time I could swear it was articulate—there were distinct words, though I could not make them out; moreover, the voice seemed more distant, and was well upon the quarter. The master and mate were of the same opinion.

“Come in board, Bradley,” said the former. “Put her about, Mr. A——” (to the mate), “we are sure to fetch the precise spot next tack.” And immediately, with the usual noise and bustle, but with more than the usual smartness, round went the brig, and away upon the larboard tack.

“Put a look-out at each cat-head, and one at each gangway, Mr. A——.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”



For a few minutes we went on in silence.

“I think we should be near the spot now, sir,” said the mate. “Shall I hail them?”

“Yes,” said the master; and the mate, going to leeward, hallooed at the top of his voice. There was no answer. By this time the moon became apparent, struggling through the fleeciness, between two of the great cloud-masses. You could not see her exact disk, but the brightness between the clouds, and the light shed upon the surface of the sea, little as it was, gave indication of her intention shortly to unveil herself.

“Keep a bright look-out for’ard there!” sang out the master.

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered the man, not in the usual drawling way, but quickly and sharply, as if anxiously on the alert.

“Gangways!” Another similar reply. “Hail again, Mr. A——.”

The mate hallooed again. There was no sound in answer. At that moment the moon shone out bright and clear. The edges of the vast rolling clouds became, as it were, silverised, and a broad flow of light fell upon the sea around us, rendering everything within the eye’s range clear and distinct.

“Do you see anything, men—any boat, or raft, or anything in the water?”

But the light was so bright and sudden, that it was nearly a minute, during which each man had searched with his eyes all the space within the horizon, before they answered, in a tone of disappointment and superstitious dread, “Nothing, sir—nothing, sir,” one after the other.

“Bless my soul, isn’t that strange? Do you see anything?” (to me).

“Nothing,” said I.

“Here, Mr. A——, go aloft into the maintop, and send two or three of the people aloft also to look out. I say, Bradley, sing out, will ye!—hail again.”

Again the seaman hallooed: we waited, but there was no answering cry. The master was now much excited.

“Maintop there!”

“Yes, sir.”

“Do you see anything?”

“Nothing, sir, but those two albatrosses in our wake.”

“Foretop!” again cried he.

“Ay, ay, sir.”

“Can you make out anything?”

“Nothing on the water, sir, but there’s something on our lee-bow that looks very like the land.”

“Come down, Mr. A——; come down out of the tops, men, and stand by to put her about again.” The master’s voice trembled as he asked me, “What do you think of that, Mr. D——? Strange things occur in these seas.”

“Why, I am puzzled enough,” said I; “the poor fellow would seem to have sunk just after his last hail.”

“No poor fellow in the case I fear,” said he, with a look of much mystery. “This is not the first of this sort of airy tongues I’ve had to do with. Just let us get her well round on the other tack, and I’ll come below and give you the yarn.”

This was said as I was about to descend the companion, for the aspect of the evening was not such as to keep long on deck a man who had no business there; but ere I had got down two steps of the ladder all was dark again; the bright moon had withdrawn herself behind a thick cloud.

Shortly after, the master, along with the mate, Mr. A—— (for it was the second mate’s watch), came into

the cabin, and, helping themselves to a glass of grog and a cheroot a-piece (for as there were no lady passengers, none of us objected to the odour, and the master did not care about smoking below), sat down with faces of much seriousness.

“As I was telling you, Mr. D——,” continued the master, “this is not my first experience of these sorts of noises. I remember many years ago, when I was a boy on board the frigate ‘Athalie,’ in the river Plate, we had a quartermaster on board of the name of O’Hanlan, an Irishman. He was a very good man so long as he was sober, only rather apt, when he had his beer, to become obstreperous, insisting that by right of birth he was legitimate King of Galway, or some other extensive district in Ireland. He was an odd sort of fellow, you may believe, and used in these fits to ask us to kiss his hand—a request to which you may guess our reply—and to swear that his family had been princes ages before the Saxon and Norman barbarians overran his country, and stuck upon the surface of the soil the roots of their mushroom nobility; moreover, that a spirit attended his family, a malignant banshee, that rejoiced in the occurrence to them of any calamity. But when sober he was a first-rate



sailor, and the officers knew it, and rather looked over his foibles. Well, there we were with a light wind one night, groping our way up the mighty river, the leads being kept going regularly in the chains, and look-outs upon the bowsprit and at the foreyard-arms. It was a beautiful evening, the water quite smooth, and the moon shining without a cloud as brightly as she did for those two or three minutes a little while ago.

“ Well, this Irish quartermaster was one of those in the chains, and, just as he was swinging the lead forward, the lashing round his waist gave away, and overboard he went, with the lead-line in his hand, with a dead plunge, not unlike that of the lead itself, and without a cry or any other indication of the accident. But the master, who, with his foot on a gun-carriage, had been looking over at him, saw him disappear, and, rushing frantically aft, cried to the captain and first lieutenant, ‘ A man overboard — O’Hanlan’s overboard !’

“ ‘ Let go the life-buoy !’ cried the captain in much excitement, and, the sentry forthwith pulling the trigger, it plunged into the water and fell away astern, with its reddish-blue light flickering and flaring upon the smooth surface of the water. ‘ Heave-to imme-

diately,' he added, addressing the first-lieutenant, 'and lower the boats.'

"But O'Hanlan was never more seen by us; after that first plunge he never rose to the surface; and though every eye that could was scanning the glassy water, still no one saw the least dark object to break the uniformly bright level. The cutter and jollyboat were lowered and manned, but where to bid them pull was a question. Just at that moment we heard a loud cry, similar in every respect to that we heard to-night, away on our lee-quarter.

" 'There is his voice,' cried the captain, 'right on the lee-quarter, right in the moon's wake; that's why you can't see him. Give way, men, for God's sake;—stretch your limbs—'tis for life!' and away shot both boats, each with the officer standing up in the bows looking anxiously out. But when they had pulled about a hundred yards from the ship without seeing any object, the mournful cry came again upon our ears, but from the *weather-quarter* this time.

" 'Gracious Heaven, Mr. Grey!' said the captain, 'have we been mistaken, and sent the boats in the wrong direction?'

" 'No, sir,' said the first-lieutenant; 'the sound

most assuredly came from the lee-quarter, I heard it most distinctly :’ and, turning to the surgeon and master, who were hard by, they both corroborated his assertion from the most decided evidence of their senses.

“ ‘But, for all that,’ said the captain, ‘it would appear there has been a mistake—recall the boats.’

“Here again the wild wailing cry came again from the same direction as it had done the second time ; and though, when the first-lieutenant hailed the tops and asked if they could see anything, they answered they could not, yet the boats were recalled, and, as they passed under the stern, were sent in the other direction.

“ ‘Did you see anything of him ?’ asked Mr. Grey. Both the midshipmen in the boats replied they had not.

“But when they had gone about as far to windward as they had previously done to leeward, the cry broke upon our ears once more, but faint and far away astern, while the life-buoy itself had hardly had time to drift more than a hundred yards from the ship.

“The captain appeared much struck. He looked

at the other officers ; then, without a word, went and walked by himself ; while the others, with faces paler than they would like to hear me say, gathered in whispering groups.

“Shortly the boats returned. They had pulled about for some time, but could see nothing. The jolly-boat was sent to pick up the life-buoy. All this while every soul of the men had been as silent as a mouse ; and you could hear the flap of the sails, the cheeping of the tiller-ropes, and the ripple of the current against the ship’s bows, unnaturally loud and distinct.

“As soon as the life-buoy and boats were secured, ‘Fill and stand on, Mr. Grey,’ said the captain ; and, without another word, he moved towards the companion, to go down to his cabin. Just, however, as he was about to descend, his eye was attracted to a bright pale flame that kept fluttering and flickering about the weather foretopmast studding-sail boom end, and then, gradually withdrawing, but seeming to hold on by the spar by a long, slender, bright limb, as if loth to leave the ship, finally let go, rose into the air, and was lost, flashing and wavering high up in the heavens. When it disappeared he turned round to look at the officers, who were all with pallid faces and silent lips



gazing aloft into the sky. Then, without addressing any of them, he bade the messenger-boy call his steward from the deck, and went into the cabin.

“In a minute all was bustle again, as the ship was brought to her course. Now, what do you think of that, Mr. D——?”

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## CHAPTER XX.

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THE MINERS: A STORY OF THE OLD COMBINATION  
LAWS.

THERE is a certain district of England which is at once a coal and an iron field. To the eye of the passing traveller it presents now, as it did many years ago, at the period of our tale, all the dreary and repulsive features such a portion of country usually exhibits. The air has a dingy and clouded smokiness, the grass and trees are of a dirty green, the fences are uncropped and broken down, and every now and then you come to fields laid partially or altogether under water. This is caused by the sinking of the earth, from the decay of the props supporting the roofs of the old wrought-out mines beneath.

There is nothing of the fresh, breezy, sunny joyousness of rural scenery—everything is bleak, cold, and

sooty, and the mind of one wandering over such ground, in place of experiencing the exhilaration of the country, is oppressed with feelings of vague despondency and hopelessness. He cannot help knowing that, instead of a ruddy-cheeked and light-hearted peasantry, those long, straggling lines of dirty, tile-roofed cottages, that stretch up from the highway, have for their inhabitants an ignorant, stunted, half-savage race, miserable, misanthropic, and inhospitable, among whom it is dangerous for the merely curiosity-led stranger to venture.

The view of the many magnificent, wood-embosomed mansion-houses of the coal and iron masters alleviates nothing of these feelings, for the sight at the same time takes in numberless hills of coal-dust, and shapeless mounds of brown iron-stone ; while the road you travel on is formed of crumbling black slag, the refuse of the smelting-furnaces, whose ugliness deforms the landscape as much by day as their volcanic glare upon the lowering clouds makes night hideous. And while you gaze, the impression irresistibly comes upon you, that the monstrous wealth of a few is the result of the monstrous suffering and degradation of the many, and that the gorgeous equipages that whirl along the furred

and jewelled young ladies of the proprietors are but in another form the labour—the life-sweat of the miners' daughters, who, in ignorance, wretchedness, filth, and disease, drag on all-fours, like brutes, the trucks of coal or iron-stone, along the stifling passages and dripping poisonous caverns of the pits, a hundred fathoms beneath the very road their proud sisters of clay are riding over.

At the date of our story there was no branch of manufacture or commerce, no mode of employing capital or labour, more productive of profit than the mining of coal and iron ore; probably there is none even now—but that was the era of the old combination laws, when it was felony for any number of workmen to murmur against the price the purchasers of their toil chose to give for it, or combine their energies to obtain the full or highest remuneration for their labour. From this and other causes, one of which was the facility and perfect legality of combination among the masters to keep up prices and keep down wages, the greatest fortunes were made with the most incredible rapidity, and the descendants of many that made them now hold high places among our privileged ranks.



One of the wealthiest and most influential masters in the district alluded to was Anthony Hasteleigh, Esq., of Weldon Edge. His annual income was much more than ten thousand pounds—how much we are afraid to say, lest we should throw discredit on our story, in the thoughts of those of our readers who may be unaware of the treasures which trade, manufacture, and mining pour into the laps of our commercial aristocracy, or who may be displeased that such enormous wealth, and all the luxuries and enjoyments it can procure, should be in the power of men of no more noble or ancient origin than Adam. He was considered rather a hard master, and was a man of much talent and considerable acquirement; indeed, his great fortune, having been almost all accumulated by himself, may tend to show this. He was a widower, and had one daughter, a young lady of no little beauty, though the energetic and determined expression that shone through her features gave them somewhat of a hard and masculine turn. She, with the two persons next to be introduced, will enact the principal scenes of the following narrative tragedy.

Mark and Edmund Vaspar were the sons of one John Vaspar, a working coal-miner, of average igno-

rance and wretchedness, who was one day killed by an explosion of fire-damp. His wife had died about a year before, and now his two sons were left to look out for themselves in the best way they could. Now, reader, you will scarcely credit it, that upon the heads of these two miserable children had descended the inspiring spirit of genius. It is nevertheless true, however unaccountable it may seem to those who believe that rank and talent always are born together, that these young beggars received from on high as much intellect as would have made a nobleman's second son premier, and his third, lord chancellor ; but as they were born of the despised caste of those that *make* the gold—what it made them this tale is written to show forth.

At the time of his father's death, Mark Vaspar, a boy about fourteen years of age, was employed in the mines, partly as a truck-drawer, partly as a sort of apprentice to the mining itself. But it happened that, a new shaft of much promise having been sunk, which required a Newcomen engine of great magnitude, he managed, with some intriguing, to get employment as a sort of assistant to, or attendant on, the engine-keeper. Up to this time he could not read, nor, though he regarded with much curiosity the

forms of the letters painted on the waggons, &c., and wondered how they could represent sounds—moreover, though he frequently expressed this curiosity, yet he never could find any one able to satisfy it—all around were as ignorant as himself. But when he got this situation about the engine, he found the keeper—a quiet, well-informed Scotchman—both able to give him instruction, and also disposed to feel amusement in the task; and while the engine, requiring them to give merely a glance at it now and then, laboured away at the pumps, they were employed in the business of teaching and being taught—a piece of chalk and one of the iron plates of the engine-frame serving as the materials.

Mark had been from his earliest years a boy of very great penetration, in addition to his talent. He had seen, almost from the day he came above-ground, that, whether there ought to be or not, there are, have been always, and will continue to be, two distinct classes of men—the high and the low—between which lies a great gulf, almost altogether impassable, and whose conditions are widely different in respect of enjoyment; the portion of one being poverty, hard labour, ungratified appetites, humiliation, early death;

that of the other, wealth, idleness, gratification of every desire, honour, and life prolonged to the utmost by care and nursing; and this too arising from no moral merit or demerit in the individuals of either class. He perceived it, and also that he himself was of that class doomed from birth to toil and disease, to every privation and all disrespect, whose sole comfort was said by the humane of the higher class to lie in contentment with its miseries, and an attempt to form a kind of negative happiness, by teaching the mind not to pine after the positive and real, which these humane had set apart for themselves.

He never thought there was the least political or moral injustice in this state of things; but, knowing himself to be born of the low or miserable class, and feeling his mind capable of appreciating the enjoyments of the high or happy one, his whole thought was to discover a means of quitting the one and finding his way to the other—a course which he knew that a few had successfully followed out. And, first, on considering the careers of these latter, he became aware that no man ever raised himself in the world by ignorance, idleness, or drunkenness, but that the steps whereby to ascend were intelligence, activity, sobriety,



prudence, perseverance. That knowledge is power he soon perceived, although he had never heard of the aphorism, or the mighty mind from whom it first emanated.

It was therefore with an engrossing enthusiasm that Mark, the mining-boy, set himself to the acquirement of knowledge, as one of the steps whereby he might make himself a *gentleman*—coveting that rank and condition solely because he believed they afforded all facilities for the gratification of the appetites and desires, and in this consisted all the happiness of which he had any idea.

The slothful or incapable may make extreme poverty or constant toil an excuse for ignorance and debasement—where there is a will there is a way, and the enthusiast after knowledge, however great his poverty, or apparently unceasing his labour, will find ten thousand means and opportunities of mental cultivation. Believing this, you will not be surprised that in three or four years Vaspar was a highly intelligent young man, and, on the death of the engine-keeper, was found best qualified of any about the works to take his place. This was the most advantageous thing for him that could have occurred. He had now good

wages, plenty of leisure, the respectability of having a charge, and the power of keeping himself personally clean. All these but whetted his appetite for further advancement, and for those great pleasures which money, and influence over the actions of others, could place within his grasp. Wealth and power were the deities he worshipped with all the fervour of youthful enthusiasm, and the possession of them the only paradise he looked forward to ; and so ardent was his pursuit that no obstacle could turn him from the path he had shaped out for himself as the most direct to this goal of his hopes and wishes. Crime, in his eyes, was no obstacle, that is, if it could be perpetrated without chance of punishment. The worst crimes he would freely have committed if they helped him forward on his way to wealth, and could be done without discovery—for of moral right and wrong he took a most extensive and “philosophical” view. A crime that could not be punished he considered no evil ; and he saw that in the world many horrible crimes are continually being committed, which, from the criminals not being punishable, are even considered as laudable actions, and sent down as such through history to posterity. You will at once see our drift when we

state that in his eyes conquest and robbery were the same thing, war in no ways different from murder, and fraud identical with diplomacy; and when we tell you further that he believed religion to be a contemptible imposition, which showed little genius in its inventors, and less penetration in its dupes, you will be able to take a fuller view of his character on the whole. He saw the world to be one vast struggle, in which every body of men strove for their own interest, and, again, each individual of every body for his own particular advantage; and this interest and advantage he finally fixed to be the gratification of mental desires and bodily appetites—the *summum bonum*—to attain which it was right to use every means, be they commonly called good, bad, or indifferent. You will begin to think that this hero of ours looks very like a villain. True, he was one; but he was not the only one in this world.

When he was about twenty-one years of age, and his brother eleven, he got for the latter employment in the engine-room, similar to what he had himself first held. This added a few shillings to their weekly income, and brought the youngster more closely under his eye; for, though he could not but look upon his

brother as somewhat of a drawback at that age, yet he intended, by proper instruction, to make him a valuable adjutant in his own schemes of advancement to money and influence. He had, from the earliest years at which the boy was susceptible of instruction, laboured to impart to him the knowledge, taste, and general mental ability he himself had acquired, and to implant in his mind the same views of men and morality as he entertained; nor were his efforts unavailing, for Edmund, at the age of sixteen, in the merely ornamental branches of knowledge, far excelled him—more than this—began to show a desire to follow out a career in life according to his own judgment, and altogether independent of that of his brother.

And this was the first cause of disagreement between them, and a heavy cause it was; for at the means Mark adopted to acquire wealth and influence Edmund showed disgust; while those proposed by the latter were treated by the former with contempt, as hopeless folly.

But we may as well give a sketch of the person and habits of each, when we can better explain their separate speculations of advancement in life.

Mark was a tall, exceedingly muscular, harsh-



featured, bristle-haired, lowering-browed man, whom no process of dressing or setting off could ever make to look like a gentleman. He was decidedly repulsive in person, and his manners (for he was conscious of his appearance) were distant and haughty, approaching to rudeness. Edmund, again, was of slight and elegant figure; and though his face too much resembled his brother's to be anything like handsome, still there was nothing about it positively disagreeable—indeed, there was an expression of intellect pervading the features, and something like a poetic glance about the eye, that to some persons would have made him highly interesting. He was a poet, too, in a measure—read, in spite of his brother, all works of fiction in verse or prose—made verses himself, and took pride in a tongue whose persuasiveness to evil not Belial's could surpass. In conversation his knowledge, however he had picked it up, seemed inexhaustible; and his manners were so winning, his voice so sweet in its sound, at the same time there seemed so much earnestness, so much enthusiasm in all his views, and so much force and originality in his ways of expressing them, that no one could avoid being pleased with him, and entertaining a desire to please

him in return. Indeed, the truth of this was proven by the ruin of two poor girls, miners' daughters, who tearfully laid at his door their moral death.

At the age of seventeen he applied to Mr. Hasteleigh for a situation as clerk in the counting-house attached to the mines. His master, pleased with his handwriting, and the smart but respectful style of the application, gave him the situation he required, and he forthwith bade adieu to the miners, and all sympathy with them, talking for ever after with supreme contempt of the class from which he sprang.

Before the death of Mr. Hasteleigh, which took place about three years afterwards, he had risen high in his confidence, and had been intrusted with several important duties, the latest of which was the superintendence of a *truck*-store, where the workmen were paid their wages, not in money, but in provisions and other necessaries, on which the master took a most respectable profit, thus grinding out of the poor creatures the uttermost farthing. So respectably did he acquit himself in this, that he rose daily higher in his employer's esteem, and was even honoured once or twice with invitations to his table, where he shone with

equal lustre in his eyes and those of Miss Joan, his daughter. It is true there were a few awkwardnesses about his presence and manners at first, at which Miss Hasteleigh did not scruple to laugh, not caring much about the pain she gave her guest, whose burning blushes bore witness to the acuteness of his feelings. Yet at each laugh Edmund wished and hoped for a rich revenge, and he had it ultimately. But all this soon was over, and his natural genius shone forth in his conversation with such power, that the young lady, who had erewhile laughed so heartily at his blunders, forgot them all, and, won by his gentleness and grace of manner, word, and thought, felt not only always happier when with him than at other times, but also, upon his taking leave, strangely anxious for a future visit.

Now this only daughter and heiress of Mr. Hasteleigh must have seemed a very lofty and satisfactory summit to the hopes and speculations of Edmund, and to afford as short a cut to great wealth and influence as could be supposed. As such did he look on her, and he laboured with his whole endeavour to render himself agreeable in her eyes. And certainly no man could be possessed of a more bewitching pre-

sence, or more calculated to win the heart of a woman, herself of some judgment ; and for this he could not help giving her credit.

And this was the scheme which Mark Vaspar looked on as hopeless folly. Now, what was his own, which Edmund did not care to abet ?

It was, we have said before, the time of the old combination laws. The workmen—wrought to the last drop of sweat, ill fed, and ill clothed, through the operation of the *truck* system—kept in ignorance and wretchedness, and, when mentioned by their superiors, only mentioned with the contempt wherewith a Brazil merchant speaks of negroes—were driven to the greatest exasperation against their employers. Any person combining, as it was called, with others to withhold their labour, so as to raise wages, was severely punishable by law ; and the ringleaders of combinations have been known to suffer banishment, long periods of imprisonment, whipping, and other inflictions, suited, no doubt, to the heinousness of the offence. Consequently, when a *strike* was in contemplation, it required to be organized with so much nicety and secresy, that, on the day fixed, every man seemed to throw up work as if from his own opinion of the propriety of the mea-



sure, without previously conferring or combining with others. In such a case the masters would be altogether unaware, till the very morning when the men *struck* work, that such a thing was to occur, and quite unable to fix upon any as the ringleaders, as they were called, or getters-up, of the *strike*. But in order to bring such an affair as this to perfect completion, it required in the organizer a genius of no mean order—and such a genius was that of Mark Vaspar.

From his twentieth year he had been sedulously going about among the men, endeavouring to persuade them he was the very man best capable of guarding their interests, and lecturing to them in knots of two or three, mingling among them at the few sports for which their overwrought frames allowed them inclination, doing for them, gratis, anything in the way of letter-writing that might be wanted—nay, even teaching some of them that desired it, to read and write.

The continual burden of his song to them, on all occasions, was the iniquitous injustice of the fact that they whose labour created the money enjoyed such a miserable proportion of it, while such a vast share fell to the luxurious, oppressive, and do-nothing masters. The doctrines of equality among mankind, agrarian

division of property, limited labour, and all other doctrines of the French school, he disseminated, advocated, and explained among them to his utmost. And when the people, over a wide district, saw his great muscular strength, indomitable courage, and his talent and information, which appeared to them almost superhuman—his continence, sobriety, benevolence, and apparent entire devotion to their interests—they began, in a year or two, to place implicit confidence in him, and to take any advice or command from him with the same reliance as if it were a mandate from on high.

Now Mark, in the course of his extensive reading, had met with accounts of secret societies for various purposes—political, religious, and of other descriptions; and knew of Orangeism, Ribbonism, the secret tribunals of the middle ages, and the Carbonarism and Calderarism of Italy. Upon the basis of what he knew of these, aided by his own invention, he built a confederation among the mining workmen, for the purposes of combination, so secretly and so perfectly organized, that he had at once every individual in it under his cognizance, and was enabled to completely baffle all the efforts of the masters, aided by the minions of the law, by bribes and espionage, either to discover

its nature, or who were its originators or directors. This society had oaths, penalties, ceremonies, tribunals of judgment, signs verbal and by gesture, and certain apparently unmeaning marks, which, chalked on wall or tree, indicated to the initiated of the neighbourhood particular understood commands.

But this perfection was the result, not of a few days' thought, but of years of study, experiment, and failure—for once, having been convicted of an active share in an abortive strike to procure certain alleviations in the *truck* system, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, with hard labour, which was rigorously inflicted. But this failure was perhaps the thing that contributed most to his ultimate success, for he had now the testimony, as it were, of martyrdom to his honesty; and the able way in which he had conducted his defence, and that of his fellow-workmen, and kept up their spirits under punishment, made those of them the most disposed to be independent at once knock under, and acknowledge him as their master-spirit. Several letters, too, which he began to show them, and which he stated were in foreign languages, understood by him, and came from high personages disposed to sympathise with and aid them, threw an air of vast and

hidden power about him, that made them regard him with a kind of awe.

After his conviction and imprisonment, he, of course, lost his situation as engine-keeper, and was disowned in public by his brother, now in high favour with his own and the neighbouring masters. He removed to a small mining town, nearly in the centre of the district, where, after idling about for half a year or so, he took on lease, and furnished, a small but pretty respectable house, and put on his door a plate bearing the inscription *Mark Vaspar, Agent*; though in what line the agency lay it would be difficult for a stranger to guess. But when we tell you, reader, that from each member of this body, containing as it did nearly all the adult population of an extensive district, he received sixpence every month as contribution to a common fund, of which he was the treasurer, along with one penny for his own salary as compensation for having lost, on their account, his means of living, and devoted all his energies to their cause—then, perhaps, you will perceive the agency in its proper light. For this money, he knew there was no fear of those who contributed ever calling him to account; for so well was the society arranged, that the number at large could not commu-



nicate with him, except through inferior officers, whom he led them to change, or arbitrarily changed himself, every six months, thus allowing them no time, even had they been possessed of intelligence sufficient, to see through his character or measures ; keeping also even from those nearest him in the ranks a sort of mysterious distance on all points connected with his own proceedings.

By means of this society he could in a morning throw every mine out of work, as the expression is, and that, too, at a moment totally unexpected and unprovided for by the masters ; and for such moments, too, he was constantly on the look-out, rendering himself as complete a thorn in their sides as could well be supposed, and materially affecting the state of markets. In fact, he wielded with admirable skill, dexterity, and success, the engine of labour against that of capital ; and, so secret and well concerted were his measures, so baffling to the ingenuity of the masters and their myrmidons, that at last they succumbed, allowed reasonable wages, and the workmen their own choice between *truck* and free shops for provisions, clothing, and general goods ; and to conclude, at any time when they desired constant labour for any push

in trade, they were glad to bribe Mr. Vaspar, the agent, with large sums of money. These he contrived to receive Jonathan Wild fashion—that is, in such a way that the givers could not positively bring the criminality of the receipt home to him. Will you believe us, too, reader, that he was in constant communication with certain government authorities as an informer? being well paid either for plausible stories without foundation, or for betraying quietly any other bodies of labourers, except those of his own society, who might be disposed, tempted by the success of those he managed, to try for a few analogous results; and of these, from the extensive ramifications of his own society, he had early and always unsuspected intelligence.

Thus, the men being happier now than they were before his supremacy, and filled with hope of being happier still—seeing, moreover, all things of the kind fail in which he had not a hand—began to look upon him with reverence, pride, and affection, considering him the very prophet of their class, and often paying, out of sheer gratitude, double the usual monthly subscription.

Money was thus flowing in upon Mark, for we pre-

sume you will be aware there was no such thing as an established *fund*, every penny he received being at once appropriated to his own uses. His continence and temperance seemed now also to have undergone a wonderful change. He dressed, ate, drank, and did other things, as closely like a gentleman as he could, and with the complete abandonment of a professed voluptuary, stinting no appetite of which the money so freely flowing into his coffers could afford the gratification. Moreover, the masters, knowing that his mysterious power over their workmen not only existed, but could be regulated, and was to be purchased, showed him every attention, invited him into their society, and he was even not a little courted. But here again the contrast was singular between him and his brother. He affected pride of his origin—practised no affectation—talked of the working class with the greatest respect—and in place of an affable manner, a musical voice, and a winning tongue, preserved and seemed to pride himself in his forbidding demeanour, and his few and harsh, but forcibly expressed, sentences, all bearing upon some important particular of commerce, politics, or the like, while he had ever a sneer for any of the little bits of refinement he could

not help observing among the wealthy and sometimes well-educated proprietors. Those blunders, too, that a person suddenly raised from the lowest caste to a comparatively high one cannot help committing, and which drew from his brother such blushes of shame, did not at all incommode him ; indeed, the sneer of utter contempt that would on such occasions glide over his dark and harsh physiognomy effectually prevented anything approaching to that unfeeling laughter which so mortified Edmund.

But while Mark was thus become a moneyed and influential man, popular and powerful, loved by the majority, and courted by the minority who hated him, Edmund continued to draw a small but still respectable salary upon the *truck* business of Mr. Hasteleigh. He envied his brother, it is true. "However," he would say, "he is my senior by eleven years ; when I am of his present age, what shall I not be ?"

But in the mean time he had been progressing further and further into the favour of Miss Hasteleigh, when an event that for a year or two had certainly not been unexpected took place ; Mr. Hasteleigh died, having first settled on his daughter, Miss Joan, and her issue only, all his property.



In fact, though she was at the time but twenty years of age, for the year or two previous the whole vast business of her father had been *bonâ fide* under her management; for he suffered from a painful chronic ailment that confined him to the house, and was glad to acquiesce in, and give the sanction of his name to, any measure she pleased; and, with the assistance of the various confidential clerks, &c., and especially of Edmund Vaspar, who acted as a kind of private clerk, she conducted all affairs with the greatest ability and success. She was now to be the independent mistress of a great and flourishing business, and to be disposed of at her own caprice alone. She was, moreover, a woman of much beauty, and of a character remarkable for masculine judgment and energy.

“She is mine!” thought Edmund—“she must be: I know she loves me; but more—she knows my talent, and that, great as her fortune is, I am the man that can double it in ten years.”

“Poor fellow!” thought Joan; “he loves me I believe; but, however good, amiable, talented, and, latterly, polished, he is still only a miner’s son. His career has been remarkable; but what is intellect,

enterprise, anything, if their possessor be low-born? I make no doubt he thinks to have me, but that cannot be; however, I will help him on in life as far as I can."

In the mean time Edmund did his utmost to render himself pleasing to her, and once or twice was convinced he would win her. He devoted himself with his whole energy to the task, considered no labour too great, and often, after a long day's work at the counting-house, would sit up half or all the night, balancing and squaring different portions of the business, to please her, or lessen her trouble; or, perhaps, arranging the returns sent by the different commercial travellers, or making up abstracts of the state of the coal and iron markets at different periods, to guide her speculations. And when she saw the pale cheek and lustrous eye, produced as much by this labour as by having the all-exciting thought of making a fortune continually before the mind, she laid it to his consuming passion, and, while she pitied him, regretted that he was of a rank so low. But she did not love him—no, *as yet* she did not—he was merely the favourite servant of the firm of Hasteleigh and Co.

She became now the great toast of the district—the very pet of its society—the cynosure of all ball-rooms, and the like places of resort. Her name and fortune were the conversation of all the young men who thought their rank (they all thought their persons) offered pretensions to her favour. Moreover, her habits and disposition were a frequent theme of discourse ; and those who were wise enough to see themselves altogether shut out from any chance of her were pretty well agreed upon the point, that whoever got her would get something to keep his wits in exercise, without any mistake.

Edmund was not surprised that with all her talent she should thus take delight in pursuits so frivolous in the eyes of those incapable of enjoying them. He could enjoy them himself, and panted for that time when his money and influence would allow him to take his natural place in the bright circle wherein she took such pleasure in holding her own eminent position. And yet this circle was that of the commercial and mining aristocracy of a district ; there was not a lord mixed with it, save at election-time, and the landed gentry affected to keep aloof from it. Probably the cause of this was that few of them had money enough

to keep up in it the consideration they deemed their due.

But shortly there appeared in this circle a class of persons who probably are the proudest, the poorest, the worst educated, the most polished, and most privileged of all orders of people above the rank of mere bodily labour. We mean military officers—not generals, colonels, and other master officers, but the majors, captains, lieutenants, ensigns, &c., who tramp with their regiments, and may therefore be styled the journeymen officers. These personages, in all provincial, towns have an *entrée* at once unquestioned into the wealthiest circles ; and a poor ensign, whose father's pay could not afford him more education than he could pick up about the barracks—who has some six or seven shillings a-day, and out of that must find a glittering uniform and a man to keep it clean—will find himself more courted than the university-educated head of a mercantile house who sends a dozen men through the kingdom to puff his goods, giving each of them four or five times his rival's income. How this comes we need not delay our story to investigate ; suffice it to say that the regiment that had for a year or so been at the barracks of the large town in which



the principal business of Hasteleigh and Co. was transacted, marched away one fine morning, to the great grief of all the young ladies, which was changed to smiles when, on the following morning, another regiment, with younger officers, marched in.

In this second regiment was Lieutenant Peeche, a young man of about twenty-five years of age, remarkable for a tall and very fine figure (partly the gift of the tailor), handsome features, a good complexion, rather stolid blue eyes, a receding forehead, and a beautiful head of hair. His connexions were as follows :—his father was a lieutenant-colonel on half-pay, and with about two thousand pounds in the funds ; and on the produce of these he had to live himself, and educate and provide for six sons. The two eldest of them he managed to get into the army, the next into the navy, leaving them to shift for themselves when there, while the fourth had to struggle into the church, and with much ado got a situation as chaplain to a travelling nobleman, whose means required him to reside abroad, while his religious predilections needed the service of the Church of England. The fifth son, having no admiration for pride and poverty, broke away at a tangent and opened a hat-shop in Dublin,

and soon made money enough to console him for being disowned by his relations. The sixth was our present Lieutenant Peeche, and was considered, both personally and mentally, the flower of the flock, was encouraged to look out for a fortune, and told that his brother the hatter's fate would be his if he threw himself away. He used to be told at home, by his anxious mother, that, though when he joined his regiment he would have to live on his pay, he might consider himself at any time worth ten thousand pounds' worth of face, and the same amount of figure (if clothed in red).

The above being his personal stock in speculating for a fortune, let us see what was his mental. He could read English, and write a note on occasion, though imperfect in the spelling department: he recollected the first five rules of arithmetic; had a vague idea that some people bothered their heads about squares, triangles, and other odd figures; had learnt the first half of the French grammar; and was nearly perfect in the arts of carving, dancing, and talking charming frivolity. In society he had a fine bold bearing, let the ghost of a strangled oath haunt the conversation now and then, and had a way of leading the opinions and directing the ridicule of fair

auditors that was surprising ; as, for instance, a young gentleman in black remarking that he had heard that mathematics were a branch of knowledge highly essential to a soldier, and that Bonaparte was deep in it—"Yes," replied Peeche, "I have heard that engineer officers work at it, but none of ours—none of ours. For my own part, I never could manage dry studies of any sort." This sentence, and the air with which it was uttered, were convincing : the ladies at once agreed that dry studies were very stupid and low things, and altogether beneath the rank and mind of Lieutenant Peeche—indeed, only fit for engineer officers, Bonaparte, and the young gentleman in black, who, feeling his discomfiture, shrank out of the conversation and was dumb, whilst his vanquisher, leaning back, showed the extreme edges of his fine teeth in a scarcely cognizable smile of self-complaisance.

But we are tired of the fool. Let us say at once that he made a conquest of Miss Hasteleigh, and married her and her money. We believe she loved him very deeply. His personal prettiness (what a quality for *a man* !), easy manners, art of talking much and softly, and the grace of his attentions to her, won her heart suddenly for a time ; during that



time he proposed, and, on her learning that he was the son of Colonel Peeche, of Dublin, and had two brothers in the army and one in the navy, being thus of most respectable connexions, she surrendered at once.

This event struck a blow at Edmund which nearly prostrated him completely, and he was all but giving up his speculations in despair, and turning his talents to some more promising pursuits. Indeed, he bitterly envied his brother, whose long endeavours and disappointments had at length been crowned with success complete and unequivocal; and so strong did this feeling run, and so humbled was he by his own disappointments, that he determined to pay him a visit.

On going to the place, drooping and dispirited, he could not but admire the pretty little cottage, with the garden behind, which Mark had provided for himself; and when he compared them with his own lodgings (for he was on a comparatively limited salary), he could not but see that the balance of happiness was altogether on his brother's side. A boy in livery admitted him, and shortly ushered him into a neat little room opening upon the garden, fitted up with books all round, thickly carpeted, and every way comfortable. Here he found Mark, seated in a library-chair of the latest



and most luxurious kind, busily engaged, pen in hand, among a lot of books, pamphlets, and written papers.

They talked for a little, calmly and quietly, there being nothing about the manner of either of them indicating their being more than strangers conversing on some unimportant matter, save the humbled aspect of Edmund, and the subdued exultation and slight sneering smile of Mark. After a little,—

“Well, you have had it your own way,” said the latter; “had you lent your aid to me I might have been what I am now a year or two earlier; or, in other words, at this time my wealth and influence might have been the square of their present amount, while you might have shared in proportion to your years. But you could not relish an apprenticeship—you wanted to jump at fortune all of a sudden; and now I suppose you are come to join with me, after the long toil, humiliation, and imprisonment are over,—and to reap a little of their good fruits.”

“Oh, no, no; I merely came to see if you were well.”

“I am well, Edmund, and I can see you are ill. I’ll tell you why: I educated you, and you deserted

me—I was persecuted, and you disowned me. Now, I am independent—the absolute ruler of ten thousand strong men, who love and implicitly obey me, for they know that the sole motive of all my actions—the only thing I have striven for—is their welfare.”

Here Edmund smiled so significantly, at the same time with so much contemptuousness, at his brother's attempt to palm a canting lie upon him, that the latter was altogether put out, and the lurid indication of a blush rose over his swarthy physiognomy. In a moment he resumed, more loudly, and in a tone that claimed not to be trifled with:—

“ I can make the proudest of our old tyrants sneak and bend and smile, though they wish me in ——, for I could break half of them within a fortnight. I have money, influence, and, in a measure, fame, and can command all happiness ;—you are poor, disappointed, considered and treated as an amusing inferior—a parasite—in that society which I enter on terms of equality. You had a scheme of your own, which has broken beneath you like a rotten staff, and you come to make a claim upon me,—you, who have never done me a particle of good, but much harm, in return for all the benefits you have had from me.”

“ You are wrong, Mark ; I have done you good negatively, if not positively ; for at any time when you were building this great scientific combination system of yours, which yields you such a revenue, I might have betrayed you to the law, exploded the whole fabric, and had you banished, or worse. You recollect the *nob*\*-shooting business. This would have been my duty to my employers ; and, besides great immediate reward, might have led to the ultimate establishment of my fortune. How do you know that when one scheme has, as you say, miserably failed, I may not be tempted to try the other, even so late as now ? ”

A deadly pallor, and an expression which, coupled with it, made Mark’s countenance, forbidding at the best of times, positively terrific, preceded his reply. He sat calmly the while, with the top of his pen in his mouth, as if subduing by effort his emotion. At length he said, “ If I thought you would, I would take immediate steps to prevent you, and you know what

\* We presume we need hardly inform the reader that *nobs* are men who take the place of labourers who have *struck* work for increase of wages, shortening of hours, or other objects, thus rendering null the endeavours of the workmen. Being workmen themselves, and thus betraying the cause of their class, they are generally objects of the bitterest enmity.

*they would be ;*”—here he laughed a short, harsh, grating “ha, ha !” which had a sort of interrogative sound, as his dark gray eye flashed upon his brother’s, searching as it were his very soul. “But as I know you dare not, brother,—so—” here, stretching his arm, he rang the bell—“I wish you a good morning: I will do nothing for you. Grey, show Mr. Vaspar out.” And thus the brothers parted.

But to return to Lieutenant Peeche. No sooner had he got his hands on a little of his wife’s money, or “the plunder,” as one of his brothers (a wag) called it, than the fortunes of his whole family took a remarkable start of improvement. Colonel Peeche removed to a more aristocratic part of the city of Dublin, and set up an equipage; Captain Algernon Peeche found his way to a majority; and Lieutenant and Acting-Quartermaster Percival Peeche purchased his company. All this showed Lieutenant Peeche to be a very dutiful fellow to his real relations, and to have a proper feeling towards his wife, as she, being the daughter of a coal-master, and of inferior rank to him, was therefore to be pigeoned in the game of marriage, just as her upstart father would have been rightly served in the game of *écarté*.



He also showed a strong disinclination to take upon himself the active conduct of the business. This arose partly from dislike to any employment except the toil fools call the pursuit of pleasure, partly from want of sufficient education (for carving, dancing, and gallantry are hardly enough of that for the counting-house), but mostly from lack of adequate intellect. He was great, however, with the horse, dog, and gun, and soon became a perfect sportsman, leaving that vast business which supported him in splendour, and enriched his connexions, with all its cares, speculations, and immense correspondence, to the management of his wife, and whomsoever of the numerous underlings connected with it she chose to call to her aid. He gave many and splendid dinners, moreover, and the eating and drinking gentry of the neighbourhood began to flock around, while his house was always free as the barrack to "ours."

But it was not many months before Mrs. Peeche began heartily to repent of her bargain. The warmth of her love for his pretty face and figure evaporated. It was a merely animal passion, and as such departed with its gratification; and she began to regard with satiety and disgust that beauty which had erewhile so

captivated her. She found him not only idiotically ignorant on all useful subjects, but contented with his ignorance, and disposed to mock with an inane ridicule any show of knowledge or talent she or others might happen to display. On all matters that required judgment or information, or the application of thought for any time, he was utterly helpless, while at the same time he entertained neither respect for the talented, nor gratitude for the assistance they might yield.

Moreover, he had never loved her ; he had not mind enough for that passion ; he had all along regarded her, as we have said before, merely as a pigeon to be plucked by him in the game of matrimony—as a prize for himself and his family. As time went on he did not scruple to tell her this. Before the first year of their marriage was over he had become to her an object of contempt, a detested burden, a dreaded torment.

When she began first to see him, as the gloss of prettiness of person and of heroic scarlet faded from him, an ignorant and tyrannical fool, she could not but institute a comparison between him and that other who she believed loved her with his whole soul, and was now suffering the pangs of disappointment—the

all-gifted and able Edmund Vaspar. Disgusted with the beggarly aristocracy of the colonel's son, she saw a true and high nobility in the genius of the young plebeian. Tired of the stolid beauty of the one, her admiration flew to the quick eye and sharp dark features that spoke the active intellect of the other. Worried to death with the yawning *ennui*, the lisped affectation, the stupid and often indecent slang of the stable and dog-kennel, she pined for the low-pitched and thrilling voice, the musical sentences and glowing ideas, of her former humble lover—for his exhaustless information on all topics, his dauntless talent, equal to every effort, and his indefatigable business ability, which no labour could tire, no difficulties dispirit.

Edmund could not but look upon his rival with a contempt which envy at his success elevated into fierce detestation; and as he sat day by day in his small wood-partitioned counting-room in the *truck-store*, so intense became this hatred, so complete his despair of advancement, that he meditated the infliction upon him of some grievous bodily harm. It was to sound his brother, who had the power to effect this, he well knew, with ease and certainty, that he paid him the visit we have detailed.

But as time wore on, when he saw the feeling growing up between the pair, when he marked it with his whole soul, as alive to it as the ear of a criminal to his sentence, then did his spirits mount again to more than their former level, and he set his active wits to work with all their pristine energy.

It was not long after the marriage till he was recalled to lend his aid in the chief conduct of the business of his new master. The latter saw him, surveyed him carelessly—would have done it with an eyeglass had such a thing been in fashion then—and, on being informed that his skill and ability were indispensable, gave his consent to his being placed in the situation of chief confidential clerk, and, turning to an eminent rat-catcher who was with him at the time, began to converse about the state of the stables in regard to vermin.

Edmund was now continually about the person of Mrs. Peeche, appearing before her in his best light, and exerting upon her all his powers of fascination, and they were many. His object was to lead her to crime, partly for his own advantage—to have her completely in his power, partly from revenge; for, from the first time she had unfeelingly laughed at his early



blunders, he had cherished against her a vindictive feeling, which his late disappointment, and the secondary misery it besides had bred for him, had certainly not put to rest. And the whole of this love then was acted—it had been all along a deception for the purpose of ambition and revenge? We cannot deny that her beauty, which was considerable, had made some impression upon him, but it was decidedly not that of *love*.

It is hard to imagine one seducing a woman out of pure animosity ; but when you reflect that in seduction it is the woman's ruin that is sought, you will be able at once to unravel the paradox. No one could be better fitted for such a course of proceeding than Edmund—totally unprincipled as he was—capable of keeping a great bad purpose constantly before his mind, and of bringing great powers to bear upon its furtherance—possessed also of a knowledge of mankind infinitely greater than might have been expected from his opportunities. All the resources of extensive reading in poetry and romance, in mental philosophy, and in the great book of nature, he brought to his aid—every scheme of attraction, every winning artifice he could think of, he practised upon her, till the poor

lady looked upon his company as a relief—a refuge—a heaven—and cursed her folly in choosing the glittering ass, from whose society she now fled to his as she would from a lazar-house to a bower in Tempe.

In a short time he was successful ; she became completely his, and doted on him with an admiration, a devotion, and a joy, which she felt was truly *love*, and as different even from the regard she had formerly entertained for her husband, as it again was from the contempt in which she held him now.

But all this was totally unsuspected even by the menials of the house, a set of people who generally are the first perceptive of such affairs. Edmund was too sagacious to allow it to be in the slightest degree evident ; and while he had the wife so completely in his power, he was finding his way rapidly into the good graces of her husband. By an exceedingly distant and deferential deportment in his presence, by numerous flatteries, well disguised and skilfully administered, and by a well-acted devotion to his interests, he in a short time succeeded in gaining his entire good-will, and unquestioning obedience to every suggestion in matters connected with the business. And this fact, whereat he made very merry in private

with Mrs. Peeche, only sank her husband a degree still lower in her contempt.

But while he was thus managing his master and mistress, he did not forget his brother Mark, and during his leisure moments concocted a scheme which he thought would make his fall sudden and complete. This was to organize a counter-combination among the masters, one of whose measures was to be a sudden and simultaneous dismissal of all their men, at a moment previously agreed upon in secret, and the importation from the mining districts of Scotland, by their collier-vessels, of a colony of new workmen, who would be content with lower wages, and, being strangers and *nobs*, and detested by the former labourers, would not be likely, at least for years, to join in any general union.

This he explained to Mr. Peeche, directing him to unfold it to the other proprietors, and get as many of them to join in it as possible.

Now at this time Mark Vaspar, by some insolent and exorbitant demand, had strongly excited the masters against him, though they were powerless to avoid complying with it. They were therefore prepared to receive with avidity such a scheme as that

invented by Edmund ; and when, at a dinner given at his house to about a dozen of them, Peeche proposed it, taking the merit of it entirely to himself, he found them disposed both at once to embrace it, and to give him credit for more capacity than they had ever before placed to his account. But Edmund, on hearing that he had thus exposed the scheme in public, before numerous servants, most of them belonging to the mining class, and some of whom he knew, and others suspected, to be members of Mark's confederacy, while he cursed his unguarded folly, could not help congratulating himself on his vanity, which had led him to claim the whole authorship.

Within an hour after the proposal had been broached, and while they were yet over their wine, Mark Vaspar had got possession of the whole affair, and had taken his measures. But before you find out what they were, let us return to Edmund and Mrs. Peeche.

It is difficult for an author to allude decorously to such a connexion ; for the odium attached to guilty love, the difficulties, its transient and precarious nature, the thought that for it all the pleasures and comforts of family and of society are put in jeopardy—that, by



yielding to it, the consciousness of honour and fair virtue is for ever gone—and the fact that, to brave this, the passion, bad as it is, must be of extremest strength—all these make the poor heart cling to it with double fondness, and give it a sweetness exquisite, though delusive and mortal, like the fragrance of the poison-laurel. Poetic justice demands that sin should not in our pages wear an enticing aspect; but if the romancer is to copy truth, he cannot but represent that “stolen water is sweet,” and, while he paints the loss for aye of self-respect, the terror of discovery and dishonour, the gnawing of conscience, and all other miseries attendant on the love we allude to, that make the mind a very place of torment, he can hardly paint them in more vivid colours than the deep delight for which they are encountered.

We have mentioned that Mrs. Peeche was a woman of considerable intellect. She possessed a mind fully capable of entertaining the passion of love in its strongest intensity and most perfect refinement—that love which is perceptive of beauty of soul alone, taking that of body but as a secondary consideration, though it may afterwards, by fancy’s aid, gild up the latter to something like a proper material image of the former

—that love in which the spirit of the object is the thing truly loved, and which is the only love that can be immortal. And with this, an emotion such as only minds of a high order and much cultivation are capable of feeling or appreciating, she loved her paramour; and with the same fervour wherewith she loved him she abhorred her husband, and would talk to Edmund of him in a manner that often startled even him.

About two miles to the rear of her house was a large wood, which, being enclosed within a round bend of a river, had no regular path through or even near it, and was quite unfrequented. It was very rocky, and thick with brushwood; and in different parts of it were the mouths of one or two old coal-mines, long ago dis-used or wrought out. One of these had the engine-house, a little turreted building, still standing, covered with ivy, and topped with waving bushes. The mounds of coal-dust or other rubbish had been converted into grassy knolls, overgrown with bramble, wild brier, and dog-rose; and in the midst gaped the black mouth of the pit. This one had been filled up to within about thirty feet of the upper surface, in which state it had been left, with its brim overhung with bushes, and its new bottom formed of mud, moss, weeds, sticks, fallen

leaves, and the like. The spot was completely surrounded by wood, and was approached by an old wheel-track that wound among the trees. Nothing could be more sequestered. The only creatures to be seen near it by day might be a party of children, gathering nuts or wild berries, or by night, the slouching, stealthy figure of a poacher.

At twilight, or early night, this was a favourite haunt of Edmund and Mrs. Peeche, for a scarcely traceable path from it through the wood opened into the rear of the park in which the house stood, and about different parts of this park she had always been accustomed to take a morning or evening walk. Here they were wont to find unbroken solitude, green foliage, a balmy atmosphere, the nightingale's music, and the soft gloaming of the summer-time, with all the other charms that act as accompaniments to love, and make its sweetness come flower-scented to the heart.

On the evening of the third or fourth day after Peeche's proposal to the masters, they were here as usual; and as they sat by each other on one of the green knolls, they were startled by groans, and a voice calling faintly for help from out the old pit whose murky mouth yawned beside them.

On the first alarm they sprang to their feet, and she, starting from his side, would have fled through the wood. But, on a moment's reassurance of themselves, they stood still, whispering, pausing, and listening again, and then, silently approaching the mouth of the mine, they parted the bushes, and cautiously looked down. They saw the body of a man laid at the bottom among some rotten brushwood, sticks, and leaves. Presently, looking up as he heard the rustling of the bushes, and catching a view of their heads—

“Mercy, good people—help me, I am dying!” he said.

“Gracious Heaven! Edmund—it’s he—Peeche—my husband!” she exclaimed, in a quick, thrilling whisper, catching her paramour by the arm with a hand that trembled as it clutched. “Three days ago he went over to Haverfield to shoot—he has not been home since. Great Providence! is it come to this at last?”

“Hold back now, Joan, dearest—hush! let me speak to him.” Then, going close to the brink, and stooping over to look down, “Is that Mr. Peeche?” he asked.

“Vaspar! thank God! help me out of this, Vaspar;



lose not a moment, for love of mercy. I am dying—I have tasted nothing for three days.”

Here he convulsively caught a handful of the wet leaves among which he lay, and pressed them to his mouth, chewing a portion. This made his voice much more strong and distinct.

“Oh, Vaspar! have you no food near you, to throw me down a morsel?—oh, for Heaven’s sake! lose no time.”

“How do you come to be there, sir? Did you fall in?”

“Oh, no, no—I was thrown down here by ruffians—the miners, headed by your brother, the agent. They attacked me, brought me here, and he with his own hands put me down.”

Here Edmund drew slightly back from the brink, and remained for a space motionless in thought, whilst the wife stood beside looking eagerly at him, as if anxious to read in his countenance his thoughts of their situation, and intentions as to her husband; but a vast tumult of new thoughts and schemes were rising, taking form, heaving upon each other, mingling and rolling in his mind, like smoke-volumes in a crater. In a minute he had resolved upon a course of conduct to pursue. The leaving of Peeche to his fate was the

principal point of it, but he desired that between himself and her it should appear that the measure was entirely of her suggestion. This was that he might have a strong hold on her for ever after, and in any dispute between them shake himself clear of the guilt, and throw it entirely upon her.

“Had I not better go to the house, and get the servants, with ropes?” said he.

“Never!” cried she, with fierce emotion. “What! would you tie me again to a hated torment thus by lucky chance cut from me? Fool! don’t you see he is here being murdered? We have not done it—we are powerless of means to help—can we be blamed? No other creature will come near—he must soon die. We can keep our secret; or, even should it come out, what can they do to us?—what have we done?—nothing! Then do nothing—let him alone, and with the blessing of—” (we cannot write the impious sentence)—“I am free once more, though with the loss of half my father’s property!”

“But starvation is a dreadful death, Joan!”

“True; but a sure one for us. It has no scar, and is not to be known from common dissolution; besides, it does not entail the hideous afterthought of *blood*.”

“But he is your husband!”—and as he spoke, she quailed before the peculiar expression of his eye—“he is the man you swore to love, and all that.”

“I made him such in a moment of infatuation, produced by his false pretences. He never loved me, but fraudulently cozened me out of my hand and fortune—and to be cozened by such a fool! Oh, there have been moments since then, when, under a stronger infatuation, I could have paid the penalty by suicide. Husband! he has been a curse to me. It comes bitter, indeed, such a reproach from you, Edmund, for whose love I have dared so much, and am now daring the punishment of hell!” And she fell upon his neck and wept copiously, while he soothed her with silent caresses. “He shall never come between our loves again,” she continued; “you surely do not wish to save him now, dearest?—you have not ceased to love me? if you have, save him, and I shall die.”

“But, Joan—my heart’s own Joan—I cannot help feeling mercy, humanity—”

“Mercy to him is destruction to ourselves: is it not better that he should die than that we should live in misery? We cannot much longer conceal our love, and then by divorce he may rob me of what remains,

and marry some fool like himself into all my father's property."

Reader, every portion of this dialogue was overheard by the wretched husband. They had in their excitement spoken in a rather elevated tone; and as he lay below in the still, moveless air, the rocky sides of the shaft had, like a gigantic stethoscope, or the *ear* of Dionysius, conducted to him the sounds! He was tremblingly alive to every syllable, for his life was depending on it, and, fool as he was, he heard his wife's infidelity, hatred, and ferocious thirst for his death, with feelings of horror, indignation, jealousy, and revenge, that rose above those of the immediate danger of his situation, and, crying aloud, by a frantic effort of his exhausted frame, he hurled at them both, but especially at her, all the epithets, curses, and threats, that a mind driven to desperation could suddenly throw together.

His wife trembled, in spite of her masculine nerve, as with her paramour she stealthily drew back, and away from the opening.

"Is there no fear of his finding his way out?" said she.

"I fear not," was the whispered reply; "the sides



of the shaft are smooth and sheer: my brother takes his measures too surely for that. But look" (and he drew an orange from his pocket); "I may throw this down to alleviate his sufferings a little?"

"No," cried she, snatching it from his hand, and flinging it away far among the brushwood; "not five minutes' prolongation of life shall he have through me. Those that will find him dead, it is possible, if he eat, might find him alive; and what becomes of us then? But hark!"

When they were no longer visible or audible to the poor writhing victim, the screams, prayers, and appeals he uttered might have turned a tiger to mercy, whilst his voice had acquired a new and rending tone that grated on the ear, and more on the heart.

"Joan, Joan," he cried, "will you leave me to die in this pit? Oh, Joan, my wife! what have I done to you that you should desert me? Joan, I am starving to death—will you forsake me, your husband? You have lain in my bosom, Joan—Vaspar, have you no mercy?—speak to her, save me; and I will forgive you both. Joan—Vaspar—do you not hear me?—will you not speak to me?—are you gone? Oh, may God's eternal wrath curse you both! Joan, Joan——"

But here, in his despair, his voice refused its office ; and when he would have shrieked, the breath soughed in his dry, inflamed throat, mocking his efforts to produce a sound. When he could be no longer heard, his wife, falling upon the bosom of her companion, and weeping as if she could have died among her tears, addressed him,—

“Oh, Edmund ! you see what I have done for you—will you ever cease to love me ?”

They kept their secret well.

In about eight days Mrs. Peeche sent to Haverfield, a distance of about twenty miles, to learn if her husband was still there. The answer was that he had not been there at all. A search was immediately instituted, and a large reward offered for information regarding him. At length he was discovered by some labourers out of employment, who had engaged in the search with a view to the reward.

Nobody had any doubt that he had fallen into the pit by accident, while unwary in the pursuit of game, for his loaded gun was found beside him among the wet leaves. And while there were no marks on his frame of any violence, one of his shoulders was dislocated, as would be the likely consequence of such a

fall. The verdict found by the coroner's jury was, in consequence, "Accidental Death."

It was not long till Colonel and Major Peeche arrived, accompanied by a couple of lawyers; and though Mr. Hasteleigh, before his death, thought he had pretty well secured his fortune to his daughter and her issue, they managed, as representing the heirs of the deceased Mr. Peeche—for he had no children—to secure a considerable amount of property. As soon as this matter was settled, Edmund, who had been ever since the death of his master at the actual uncontrolled head of the business, married the widow, and thus became Mr. Vaspar of Weldon Edge.

No sooner had he done so than his character came out in its true and most vivid colours. The name of the firm was no longer Hasteleigh and Company (for Lieutenant Peeche, tenacious of the military and aristocratic dignity of his name, had never allowed it to be associated in public with the coal-trade). A complete revolution took place, too, at Weldon. All the servants received their dismissal, and were replaced by others from distant parts of the country. New improvements in the machinery of the mines and iron-works were introduced, and totally new discipline and

arrangements among the men. Schools were instituted, and a pretty good library rapidly got together. This was, however, for no philanthropic object, but solely as a business speculation, and as tending ultimately to his own great gain.

Although he had come to a noble fortune, still, from the slices taken from it by the Peeches, and the maladministration of the lieutenant, it was much less than it would have been had he got it when he was first, as he believed, in such a fair way. Every means, therefore, of improving it he put into active operation, and one of the chief he could think of was to put an end to the domination of his brother among the men, and thus get the poor creatures once more entirely into his power as a master, and as helpless as they were before the genius of Mark had given them such unity, strength, and importance. Having fully resolved upon this, he invited his brother to his house.

He received him in a manner quite opposite to the reception he had met with from him about a year before. His immense house, his library, with all articles of taste, and luxuries in the way of furniture, he showed him ; introduced him to his wife, and asked him to stay to dinner. All dainty viands, and rare



and expensive wines, he set before him, and took every means to make him see the apparent happiness in which he lived with his wife, who vied with him in paying his brother attention.

Mark knew quite well that all this was intended to give him pain—to excite his envy and humble his pride; and he felt the intention to be fulfilled. He was hardly prepared, however, for the disclosure that followed it.

Immediately on the withdrawal of Mrs. Vaspar, Edmund, bidding the servants leave the room, so soon as they had done so, and he had pushed the decanter to his brother, made to him coolly the proposal that he should immediately break up his combination society, expose to him all its signs and secrets, plots and crimes, and leave the district for ever, being grateful that he was to take the money he had made with him, and that he was not delivered up to the law to answer for his enormities.

“For I am determined,” continued Edmund, “to allow no one to dictate to me in my business, or stand between me and my interest. Moreover, no man shall bully me or terrify me into any steps. I am on my guard, and have made all my preparations.

I will be absolute lord of my estates, and all upon them."

Mark heard all this in silence, but the colour forsook his face, giving place to a tallowy paleness, while ever and anon some feature would give a small convulsive twitch, and his eyes became completely altered in colour and expression, looking bloodshot and lurid in place of their ordinary gray.

"And what," said he, after a little, "if I should simply disobey this command, and go on as before?"

"Within a week I will have you in gaol, and you are as sure to be capitally convicted as you are that you deserve the fate. The combination business might be transportation—the extortion of money from men and masters might be, possibly, death—but the killing and conspiring to kill and maim *nobs*, and the murder of Peeche (for I have witnesses to prove you did it), make the gallows inevitable."

"And I murdered Peeche, did I? Where did you learn that fact?"

"From his own lips, as he lay dying of hunger in the pit; and another person besides myself heard him say it—that you, with your own hands, threw him in: that person is ready to be a witness."

Mark rose from his seat, and, pushing his chair away, whilst he glared like a tiger, unfolded his immense muscular frame, as if he would have proceeded to instant violence on the slight figure of his brother, and crushed him and his schemes for ever. But the latter, rising, nevertheless keeping his eye on his, rang a small bell. A man-servant entered the room.

“Attend to the fire, William.

“As I was saying, brother,” he continued, as Mark with quivering lip resumed his seat, “I think your best plan would be to accede to my views. No other measure will be of any avail. In truth, you will find no other course is open to you. The business you practise has been going on as long as it can go. It has come to an acme, and now must go to ruin—and what I want is to have you kept clear of its wreck, with all you have made by it.”

Here the servant withdrew.

“As for my intentions, I am in earnest, I assure you; and, were you not of my blood, and otherwise did I know what I know, you should swing within a month. It is only the consideration of public opinion that makes me let you off; I should like the whole thing to be brought about quietly. One indispensable

condition is, that you shall leave the country. If you remain here, or near this place, you will have your wits eternally at work, plotting and scheming—I might as well have no estate.”

“It is too important a matter to decide upon without a thought,” said Mark; “give me time to consider.”

“I will,” said Edmund; “come here to-morrow at twelve, and I will be prepared to hear you; and, in the mean time, as I don’t think, after what has passed, you can relish much more wine, and as, besides, I don’t feel exactly comfortable with you so near me, you had better take your leave.”

Mark withdrew, half stunned with what he had heard, and, seeking his own home, sat down to ruminate; and there he sat, without undressing, the whole night, revolving what measures he could adopt.

He found his vast combination scheme, which he had reared around him at such an expense of time and thought, of crime and punishment, which was to him the source of so much influence and emolument, was about to crumble to dust, like a gourd smitten by the sun. He had established it upon so firm and extensive a basis, protected it with so many outworks,



and hidden it in such a mist of secrecy, that it seemed to him indestructible. But here a more potent magician, in one moment, was about to shiver it to pieces. And against his talisman, the law, there was no counter-spell.

He saw but two alternatives—one, the removal of his brother; the other, to yield up with a good grace his system, and sell the ruins of it to the best advantage. The former he at first determined to adopt; indeed, he had a plan formed to seize the person of Edmund, carry him off, and confine him in one of the mines in the neighbourhood, at the same time to throw the men off work by a sudden *strike*, and keep them thus till anxiety about his numerous speculations, or positive dread of bankruptcy, should extort from him conditions of mutual accommodation.

“Nay, he might even,” thought Mark, “if his place of concealment were known to only one or two, and they trusty, be served as Peeche was.”

But he had not reflected long when he began to perceive that this plan was quite hopeless—for his brother, a very different character from the other victim, was sure to be well on his guard, and to have plenty of counter-schemes in action. He therefore

finally, seeing no better resource, resolved upon the latter alternative; for he saw that his brother possessed the power to expose him to condign punishment—that, by an event he had never contemplated, but which had been brought about by one of his own crimes, it had become his interest to do so—and, when it was, he knew he would do it without fail.

Nevertheless it was not without the bitterest sorrow he could find it in his heart to abandon that organized confederacy which had been the sole occupation of his thoughts since boyhood—the one object of all his youthful enthusiasm—which had been the source of his cares and joys, hopes and fears—of his pride and power—which had brought money to his pockets, and respect to his person. And must that vast combination system, by which one intellect could, for one purpose, so secretly yet so certainly, direct, arrest, give, or withhold the labour of ten thousand hands—that system, so philosophical in theory, so admirably efficient in practice, which he could have well trusted to carry his fame as a man of genius to posterity—must it be at once annihilated, and pass for ever from thought and from memory? It had withstood for years the open attacks and underhand machinations of its enemies,

and now it was to be destroyed by the mere threat of one ! But that one was himself of the labouring order—a man of high talent—*knew the system*—knew all its springs and wheels—indeed, had formerly been a member of it, and bound by oaths which he did not value one farthing ; and here Mark could not but feel a pang when he reflected who had taught his brother this value of an oath.

“ The first day he left us and went cringing among the masters—that day should have been his last ; if it had, he would never have done this : from that one oversight the labour of a tolerable intellect for a long series of years has thus, by one blow, fallen to the ground.”

Next day, at the appointed hour, he waited on Edmund. They met in the library of the latter.

Mark, like one entering a cold-bath, plunged at once into the business, stating his willingness to betray the whole.

“ But what *compensation* am I to expect for my own losses by the disclosure ?” said he.

“ Why, indemnity for your own share of it, which is the principal one. You shall have your life, and all the money you have made.”

“Nay, if that is to be all, I can have much more by disclosing the whole to the government myself, and getting admitted as crown evidence.”

“But that would cost the lives of three or four of these poor people you have misled.”

“I dare say a few would be *expended*, but then I should be nothing indebted to you: moreover, for the betrayal of such a combination scheme as *mine*”—(here he sighed involuntarily)—“I am sure of a thousand pounds from the secret service money, besides the credit. If you think I could not do this safely, look at that.” And he held a paper before his brother.

Edmund read it. It was addressed to magistrates, justices of the peace, &c., directing them not to proceed against Mark Vaspar, agent, without first communicating the whole matter to the Home Office. And when he saw the name signed to it, he could not help, as he repeated it aloud, addressing his brother.

“Well, Mark, you are the most consummate, traitorous villain it ever entered my imagination to conceive.”

Mark sneered fiendishly, but remained motionless.



“I see, from the date of this, that ever since the year 179— you have been a hired informer.”

“Yes, and have made something by it, I assure you.”

“Well, I will accede to your terms. I will guarantee the masters’ paying you a thousand pounds, on your effecting the complete subversion and annihilation of this confederation.”

“I shall want a document from you, in the form of a letter, to that effect.”

With this request Edmund hastily complied. Then, taking paper, he wrote from the dictation of his brother, whose lips were bloodless, dry, and had a slight quivering motion as he spoke. Every degree and division of the society was stated, with their oaths and secret ceremonies, the ringleaders of each, their separate signs, words, and ciphers, and places and times of meeting. When he had finished with this—

“Then there was the death of William King,” said Edmund, “who was shot at the brier copse six years ago. I think I was led to suspect it was the man Crow that did that job. What is his proper name?”

“I thought you did not intend to bring these men under the law?”

“Not if they do as I desire. I want merely to get a hold upon them.”

“I do not know his name—he goes by the nickname of Young Crow. His father was Old Crow; and I believe neither of them knew either name or surname.”\*

“And whom could I have for witnesses?”

“Long Bill Brown saw the act. He was with King at the time, and that night was sworn in and left off *nobbing*, bringing all the rest of them into the confederacy.”

“And who blinded Mr. Wood, the overseer, with vitriol?”

“A man now at the High Corner pit, by name Peter Watkin, commonly called ‘The Slounger.’ The liquor was procured from one John Coats, a workman at the St. Margaret’s Hall printing-work. There were three in company with the Slounger; one was Thomas Overton, since dead; another, Thomas Chummins, nicknamed ‘The Handy Kid,’ em-

\* This is not an uncommon thing in the mining districts, especially the northern.

ployed at the Rock-house mine ; the third was myself.”

Over all the other atrocities, in the way of murder, intimidation, and conspiracy, that had been committed by members of his society, he went minutely, exposing freely the criminals, the objects desired in the crimes, the circumstances, and those that aided and abetted.

When Edmund had done writing, “Well then,” said he, “now that it is all out, and I know so much of you as I do, I would not wonder to see you playing a double game, and betraying these men to the law on your own account, for the rewards and pay of the informing part of the business, besides what you are to receive from us.”

“I should not be surprised myself,” replied Mark, with mocking levity ; but, immediately knitting his harsh features into threatening sternness, he came out rapidly with—“But if you should *play double with me*, or after this betray me either to the law or the confederacy, beware—I say beware how you goad a crushed and desperate man.”

“Oh, the confederacy shall not hear of it through me. There are others who can give them a hint ; look here !”

And, going to the side of the room, he threw open a concealed door. It had been made, for uniformity with the rest of the room, to resemble shelves and leather backs of books, each volume lettered and numbered, and was so ingeniously contrived and finished that nothing but a minute examination could unveil the deception.

Mark wondered at this proceeding, but stood as if thunderstruck as he beheld enter from the dressing-room into which it opened the very men he had been just betraying—to wit, the man called Young Crow, and Peter Watkin (the Slounger), along with others of much weight and influence among the men. Nothing could have been further from his expectation than this consummation of the adventure. There they stood before him, begrimed and muddy, in their uncouth black mining clothes, scowling upon him through the darkness of their faces like so many accusing devils. Oh, what a sight was this for Mark!—whither could have sneaked away from him his boasted and long-tried cunning, that he should be so miserably outwitted—should have so wofully and irretrievably committed himself? And who could, with a pen adequately forcible, describe the convulsive throes of his mighty



though reprobate mind? Bitter, bitter chagrin, anguish, panting thirst for vengeance, rage, hate, malice, pride, despair, and reckless defiance—all these fierce passions glowed through his harsh and now haggard countenance, united into one expression, that had in it a terrible grandeur, a sublimity, while the big tears coursed down his rugged cheeks—a thing of which he was himself unconscious. Thus he stood, regarding them, then his brother; anon turning, and, staggering slightly as he did so, he walked towards the door and went forth from the house.

This, then, was Edmund's plan to break up the combination-union—by exposing Mark to the body in his most villanous colours of double treachery, and by showing them that they were completely in his own power, that their whole organization was known to him, and that at any time he pleased he could give up any member to capital punishment or transportation.

The men he had brought to the house he had all along suspected—indeed, from his half-and-half connexion with the society, all but understood—to be criminals, or connected with the crimes. At all events, they were exceedingly popular and influential among the great body of the workmen. Two of them were

employed at his own mines, and he could thus easily get hold of them ; another he enticed to his house, offering him the situation of “ganger,” or petty overseer ; the fourth by stating that a letter from his brother, who had been banished, was in his possession. When he had got them together he informed them that their great apostle, Mark Vaspar, was “bought and sold,” and had ‘sold’ them and the rest of the confederacy. To give them proof, he put them into the small dressing-room, bidding them apply their eyes and ears to crevices he had previously made, and they would soon become aware of the truth of what he told them.

On the bank of the river we have described as circumscribing the wood in whose limits Peeche was destroyed, was an extensive meadow, surrounded by grounds wooded, and considerably elevated above its own level. On the night after the occurrence of the scene last narrated, a convocation of miners belonging to the society, to the number of about a thousand, were met here. Nothing could be more picturesque than this assemblage, as they stood together in the bright moonlight, with their curious caps and cowls, their

loose and peculiarly shaped clothes, and their hands and faces all of one deep and mystic black. Many of them, too, had stuck in their caps their small tin lamps, which, reflecting the pale moonbeams, sparkled strangely, giving a most unearthly aspect to those who wore them. In short, if a painter had to limn some diabolic conclave described by a German romancer as assembled on the Walpurgis night, this meeting would have afforded him an admirable study. They stood and reclined pretty much in a double circle, with their orators in the midst, and had about twenty or thirty scouts on the high grounds around, whose duty it was, customarily, on any person being seen, to observe him closely—if he were not dangerous, to detain him from advancing; if he were, to give a signal agreed upon, when the whole meeting would disperse, either for the night, or to assemble elsewhere.

To this assembly went, of his own accord, Mark Vaspar. Such a proceeding would seem madness, but Mark did nothing without a purpose—the purpose of this was revenge against his brother. He knew the attempt was fraught with the greatest danger to himself; nevertheless he had hopes of leading the men to some wholesale attack upon Edmund—some “do or

die ” business upon which he had not yet resolved, leaving its nature to be determined by after circumstances. He hoped to completely satisfy the men that the account they might have heard was false or mistaken—trusting to his great influence over them, his long management of them, the apparent improbability of one who had suffered and done so much for them betraying them, but placing his chief confidence in his own talent, tact, and powers of persuasion. But he was mistaken ; he found the men entirely predetermined against him, treating him on his approach with a sneering malignity that boded the worst evil. There is no crime for which the working orders have a greater detestation than treachery—especially treachery to themselves ; even suspicion of it at once condemns.

He was immediately seized, and subjected to a regular trial by jury—a form of procedure which he himself had instituted among them, and at all previous instances of which he had himself presided. Not “ the man Charles Stuart ” at the bar of an incensed people could be more surprised at the novelty of his situation than was Mark Vaspar before the judgment of those he had so long and so implicitly ruled, for



good or bad, with no standard but his own opinion. Nevertheless he nerved himself for the hazard, and stood collected and firm, resolved to make the best of every word that should be spoken, every incident that could occur. The evidence against him was damning. There were the four witnesses, each examined separately, and all agreeing in their black and unanswerable tale, which no cross-questioning from Mark could shake in the smallest iota. Then there was brought forward a copy, on paper, of his disclosures, and another of the letter guaranteeing him the money, which had been taken, by permission of Edmund, by Peter Watkin, who happened to be able to write a little, having been taught that little by Mark himself, years before. These last appeared to sink his heart considerably; nevertheless he entered on a long and most able defence, if intricate sophistry be a proof of ability. He endeavoured to urge the falsity of the accusation, but his own bare assertion was all the proof he could offer. He laboured much to persuade them that the view his accusers had taken of the matter was altogether an erroneous one—his whole apparent disclosures having been but part of a scheme to dupe his brother and the other masters, from whom there was

great danger impending on them ; with much in the same tenour. He dwelt greatly besides on the length and value of his services ; but all was in vain ; he was found most clearly and barefacedly guilty by the jury, and the whole meeting, as his judges, proceeded to pass sentence upon him by vote. It was DEATH !

He was immediately surrounded and marched away to a place about a mile distant, where was an exhausted coal-pit, known to be eighty fathoms, or four hundred and eighty feet, in depth. After receiving his sentence he spoke not a word till his arrival at the mouth of the mine. He walked along, looking in a solemn, absent manner, straight before him, and once or twice raised his eyes, and gazed with an earnest glance at the starry firmament, which was that night exceedingly bright and glorious. What thoughts were passing in a mind like his in such circumstances—whether horror of the future—repentance of the past—the galling feeling of for ever disappointed revenge against his brother, or envy of the latter's triumph compared with his own miserable defeat—whether dread of the hideous death he knew he was moving to, or ideas of escape and freedom—we cannot imagine, nor will attempt to say.

On reaching the mouth of the mine he was told he would have five minutes allowed him wherein to say his prayers, and one offered him a methodist hymn-book—probably the only book of any description in all that assemblage. He motioned it away with a bitter smile, and, turning, asked one who stood by to lend him a small iron tool in his hand. With some hesitation it was lent. Taking it in his hand, he knelt down, and began to trace with it, on a smooth flat stone that lay near the brink, some strange lines and curves. It was the figure of a proposition in Newton's *Principia*, demonstrating the regular motion of the planets in elliptical orbits.

They could not conceive what this might mean, but, as he kept cutting the figure deeper and deeper into the stone, interrupted him, telling him "Time was up." They then bound his hands behind him and his feet together, and placed him standing on the edge of the yawning shaft. While the rest stood round in a dense circle, one advanced, and, standing near, pushed him. As he went somewhat slowly, inclining from his balance over the fearful brink, he gave no cry, but, with a convulsive effort of his mighty strength, wrenched one arm free from the fastenings that bound it, and,

clutching the man who had pushed him by the fluttering, loose, and ragged clothes, drew him with him, and, ere the latter had time to utter one wild scream, down they went together, knocking and smashing against the rocky sides of the pit; a distant, faintly-heard heavy blow telling when their broken bodies struck the bottom.

The thousand men stood listening appalled. A humming whisper stirred among them — “It was Young Crow !” and, breaking up into groups, they hurriedly left the place, and in five minutes were completely dispersed. And that was the last meeting of the combination society.

And so Mark Vaspar passed away, leaving behind him no memorial of his crimes or his talents, save the muttered curse in the mouths of those he had betrayed, who were bound by their secret oaths not to breathe his name even in solitude, and the strange figure cut in the stone, a mystery to all that saw it, at the spot where he met his death.

His fate was not known, even to his brother, for some years, when he was informed of it, in language uncouth but strikingly forcible, in an anonymous threatening letter. Up to that time he believed he



had absconded on the night after being denounced, as nothing was found in his cottage save the furniture, which was claimed for rent and taxes.

But let us trace the after life of Edmund. He was successful in business to a singularity; everything seemed to flourish with him, save that he had no children. But with all this no creature could give even outward evidence of being more miserable. It was remarked by all with whom he came into contact that he appeared a very picture of remorse and mental agony, and this was especially evident after the period at which he became informed of the fate of his brother.

About this time he took to the private consumption of opium, which he carried to such an extent that it brought him to the brink of the grave. He was confined to bed at last, dying with all the loathsome symptoms attendant on death from such a cause. A medical practitioner who was called to prescribe for him, on hearing the nature of the case, at once completely stopped the opium. But deprivation of the stimulating drug seemed only to accelerate his dissolution, and at length he ceased to breathe.

He was buried in a vault beneath the church of the

parish in which his house was situated. There was a small loophole in the wall, guarded by a crossed stanchion of rusty iron, nearly eaten through by the damp air.

“At that time,” said the gentleman from whom we had the incidents of the above tale, “I was apprentice to a surgeon in the town of —, about ten miles from Weldon Edge. There were several others in the place, and we all knew each other—indeed, formed a society for mutual instruction.

“Now one of us was out near this parish church on the day of the funeral, botanizing, or for some such purpose, and, seeing the sequestered character of the place, and reconnoitring the nature of the vault, formed an idea of stealing away the body of Mr. Vaspar, for the scientific purpose of anatomisation. Communicating the thought to us, three of us set out on the expedition.

“We managed to bend aside one limb of the crossed stanchion, and, being all pretty slim fellows, got through the loophole into the vault with tolerable facility, and commenced digging by the light of a dark lantern, having previously hung up a couple of great coats, by way of blind, before the loophole by

which we had entered. Presently we came to the coffin, prized open the lid, and turned aside the drapery to see what sort of a subject we were likely to have.

“ To our amazement we found him turned nearly completely round in his coffin! One ankle was dislocated, the leg being firmly locked between the sides; while that part of the bottom on which the head and shoulders lay was flooded with blood, which appeared to have come from the mouth. We lifted up our heads and looked at each other in horror. He had evidently been buried whilst animation was only suspended, and had recovered consciousness in the grave; and dreadful must have been his vain struggling against the walls and roof of his firm and narrow house. On turning his face up a new dread froze our veins. Never on any countenance, or in any painting, did I see such a ghastly picture of despair; every feature spoke sense of dreadful danger, agony of body, and violent muscular straining, with sudden and total departure of all hope, whilst the mouth appeared to have poured forth gushes of blood.

“ We were so struck that two of us were for burying him up again and having nothing to do with him; but

the third, who now holds a high rank on the army medical staff, insisted on carrying him off.

“ ‘ If he was buried alive,’ said he, ‘ he is dead enough now for all practical purposes—there is no questioning that phenomenon ; so let’s precipitate him into the sack, bundle him up, and be off in a hurry. It will be long before we get such a precious chance again.’

“ And so we did, filling up the grave, lowering the flagstones that covered it, and bending back to its place the stanchion, so as to leave things as like what they had been as possible.

“ The body was dissected in different portions by different students, and each preserved, and carried with him to whatever part of the world fortune and his profession took him from our town, the bones of some of his members, or some of the organs of his body, preserved in spirits. The rest of the flesh, as it was dissected, away piecemeal we flung into the river that ran through the town ; nor was it ever suspected that he did anything but sleep undisturbed in his grave.”

The end of Mrs. Vaspar was analogous in its misery. After the death of her husband, on whom



she doted fondly to the last, it became evident her reason was impaired. She was put under restraint, and all the means that were then used or known in the treatment of mental disorders were put in requisition, but fruitlessly, and she ultimately died mad. Her mania was general—on all subjects; but she had one particular hallucination that took the lead—one scene seemed to be continually passing before her mind, and she would constantly be enacting it, though the precise words and gesticulation might vary at times.

“Edmund, dearest Edmund,” so would her ravings run, “how can you think of such a thing? Take him out?—let him perish!—we shall be happy then. No, no! save his life, and you will make me a murderess either of him or myself! We shall never separate more, my love—he is sure to die! Save him?—then you may stab yourself and me! Oh, Edmund, I love you—my heart dotes on you! I have lost my soul for love of you! Take pity on me, and love me—it is all the happiness I can ever have, and happiness indeed it is! Kiss me, Vaspar! We are happy; and he—my curse!—is enduring the worst misery man can suffer—dying of hunger! While the kiss of our en-

dearment falls soft upon the perfumed air of this chamber, his last groans sound hollow in the cold, murky pit! Whilst we are lost in blessed forgetfulness, he sleeps in the arms of death!"

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## CHAPTER XXI.



## THE OUTCAST.—A TALE.

Hotel de l'Orient, Marseilles, July 6, 183—.

DEAR ———,

I TAKE the opportunity of the packet's return, to send you the papers of my uncle, of which I spoke. You no doubt thought I was off with them for good, to the disappointment of your curiosity ; but the fact of their being among my baggage is altogether owing to my hurried departure on the morning after our last meeting. As I have slender recollection of much that passed that evening, and am not aware whether or not I explained to you their origin, I may as well do it now. The narrative is the production of my uncle, the late Dr. E——, of ——,\* and refers to a period

\* One of our Mediterranean possessions.

of about thirty years back, when he was endeavouring to conjure up a practice in England. Why he should ever have written it I cannot imagine, except it were from the difficulty of altogether keeping a secret. He died very suddenly, and these papers, tied up with others of a similar description, old love-letters, &c., came into my possession. You will observe that the names are in cipher, but this is not of much importance, and you can understand the narrative quite as well by supposing names for the personages, such as Jenkins or Snooks if your taste lie one way, or Howard or Cavendish if the other. I may mention to you that, though a member of the doctor's family, and brought up for the most part in his house, I never heard of the circumstances till the papers came into my possession.

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It would be tedious to detail the various steps through which my acquaintance with Mr. Emmanuel Jaques, a gentleman of Jewish lineage and persuasion, advanced to intimate friendship. I was endeavouring to establish a practice in a small town a few miles from London, and he inhabited a retired cottage in its vicinity. When I first knew him, an elderly



man, by name Conrad Hermann, and a girl about fourteen, called Rachel, resided with him ; an aged Hebrew female domestic and a kitchen-girl formed the other occupants of the house. They lived an exceedingly retired life, and drew their support from some sources with which it was long before I became rightly acquainted.

At the time I thus introduce them to you, Mr. Jaques was about twenty-four years of age, and was, upon the whole, a young man of the strangest and most striking appearance, in person, manner, and habits, that I have ever observed. No man could appear more calculated for a complete enjoyment of the pleasures of society, and yet he seemed debarred from them by some strange, invisible chain—some mental barrier, that kept him back from any advances toward his fellow-beings. He was possessed of remarkable beauty of features, with the peculiarities that are generally held to indicate a Jewish origin discernible upon them. He had, moreover, in all things, very much the aspect of a gentleman ; was always remarkably clean and neat in his apparel, but used perfumes to excess. The skin of his hands and the upper part of his face was extremely fair, though on close inspec-

tion you would find it seemed not the common white of the skin, but a sort of dry white, like that of a waxen bust in a perruquier's window. The colour on his cheek was delicate and rosy, like the complexion of a female child, yet had also a dry, sapless appearance. A pair of very expressive dark eyes, and hair of a jetty curl, lent their aid to make him what he really was, the finest-faced man I have ever seen.

But mark ! Upon this beautiful face sat an expression the most unique and constant—that of painful depression, varying in its range of poignancy, from melancholy, or even a kind of resigned pensiveness, to the writhing features and upward-strained eyes which seemed to indicate mental anguish unbearable yet hopeless—complete despair, unspoken, because altogether beyond human appreciation or sympathy ; and this latter was as the rule—the former was the exception. A person on first observing this would have concluded it to be the despair of religious fanaticism with regard to futurity, for nothing save the idea of a perpetuity of torture—the most extreme which omniscience could invent or omnipotence effect—and that, too, unavoidable, indeed, foreknown and fated from everlasting—could be conceived capable of producing a

look so preterhuman in its misery and hopelessness—so sublime in its bleak elevation above the common smiles and tears of mankind. But it was not so.

I have myself suffered from that hideous mental malady Infidelity (and what studiously-addicted young man has not between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five?). I have suffered from it, and know the agony of being without hope—of believing that there is *no state* after death—that in the grave there is no more of the sweet consciousness of existence, of the noble faculty of thinking—no more of the exquisite stimulus of passion, of the soft bliss of emotion—nothing to be perceived — nothing remembered — nothing felt — nothing known—all blank, blank, for ever blank. I have known this ; and though, when suffering under it—ay, and under the additional pressures of poverty and disappointment, and no faith in a Providence to help—I have been able to smile with one and laugh with another, and to give little outward evidence of inward suffering, save in this supposition also. Yet, believing this to be the extremest misery a well-cultivated and sane mind can suffer from, I had no hesitation in ascribing it as the cause giving origin to the awful despondency of

Jaques ;—but I was in error. Surely his must have been indeed a dread affliction !

I never saw in his features that look of ordinary feeling, of apathetic intelligence, neither joy nor sorrow, which every one is accustomed to see on all countenances. The best expression they commonly wore was pensive resignation to a great and hopeless evil. I never observed him laugh or smile in mirth ; the most ludicrous scene was able to elicit no more from him than an inane look, as if he were gazing through it at something beyond. The brightest weather, the most beautiful scenery, failed to put him in spirits. Music could not do it : lighter strains he heard as if he heard them not, and sadder or more solemn melted him to tears ; and then, with the big drops falling from among his fingers, or steeping his handkerchief as he bowed down, leaning upon his hand, he appeared to feel the greatest degree of happiness, or rather the least degree of wretchedness, that fell to his strange lot.

He seemed a being devoid of all regards or sympathies for his kind or their concerns—who walked the world alone, unmoved by its proceedings, uncaring for its opinions, his whole mind being required for one



purpose—to concentrate itself under some vast and mysterious affliction—some affliction unmerited, or, if merited, not by the being who thus endured it, but by his erring fathers. His gait was slow and rambling, his aspect abstracted, his whole appearance unlike that of an ordinary man. His singular beauty, his rapt and, at the same time, agonized demeanour, his continual silence and solitude, gave him the appearance of some superior being condemned to fulfil on this earth a dreadful weird, with unseen furies lashing his spirit. Day after day might he be seen with the same costly and careful dress, giving forth the same overpowering odour of distilled essences, idling thoughtfully along a sequestered path, picking his steps with the utmost caution, avoiding with extreme care quarrelsome or suspicious-looking people, cattle, dogs, and places where the slightest danger might, by possibility, be imagined; yet seeming as if his dress, as well as the direction or manner of his walk, were a matter of no import to him, his whole interest being engrossed by the mighty hidden woe that was preying upon his spirit. Sometimes the expression of mental torture in his countenance was so fearful, that the neighbouring folks, contact with whom he seemed so much to dread

were frightened on their own side, and, shunning his haunts as much as lay in their power, when they could not help meeting him passed hurriedly by with a shudder, and a muttered prayer for blessing to themselves. Those who were in the habit of meeting him much thought him a maniac; and the fact that Mr. Hermann was nearly always seen attending at a distance, and watching all his motions, justified this belief. I entertained it at first myself, but afterwards found I was wrong.

He was not a man of high talent or acute judgment, his temperament being altogether sensitive and emotional. And his emotions, which thus wholly influenced him, were of a most vivid character. I never knew one, in my opinion more prone to entertain the feeling of strong and true friendship than he was; he could give freely every favour, forgive every fault, and still bear unchanged regard. Love, too, I found he did cherish—a pure and most fervid passion, but a sorrowing and fruitless one, fated to be disappointed. Fear ruled him absolutely. On first acquaintance with him, you would have thought him the most pitiable coward. He appeared to dread everything: a shower of rain—the sight of an ox driven along the path—of a spirited

horse, or a tattered beggar, would, on his first descrying either, drive him in terror to his house, where, with locked doors, he remained for a time. The sight of fire-arms, or even of a common knife, he could not bear, and the view of one fainting or in fits induced the worst paroxysms of his dark melancholy. And yet this cowardice was, in reality, not a primary but a secondary feeling. He did not dread danger or death on their own account, but because he believed they would infallibly expose to the eyes of men the secret vulture, whose feeding upon him he could not have revealed, and live. There was a shame, though not that of guilt—a mortal shame—wrapped up in the dread mystery of his hidden agony, which the least accident might unveil.

Hope was a passion that he had long banished from him as a heartless deceiver; but anger and jealousy would, in certain circumstances, overrun his mind like barbaric hordes, converting everything beautiful or noble into a confused mass of discoloured ruin.

His sensibility was excessive: the least kindness he felt and was eminently grateful for; while unkindness, though haply not intentional, wounded him to the soul. Though offered in the way of sympathy, the slightest

allusion to the cause of his strange and continual despondency vexed him exceedingly. One could not help immediately seeing the extreme pain and shame he suffered from—it was so plainly evident in his exquisitely expressive face, which seemed as it were a transparency, where every bright or shadowy line of emotion showed itself. He was most gentle in all his words and deeds, and, when he spoke, his voice had a sweet low thrill, as of habitual sorrow.

I have stated that he was not a man of great talents, but of strong emotions and the acutest sensibility. All his acquirements were in accordance with this character, being of the lightest and least reflective kind—his books consisting of poetry, romance, and what is called general literature, nearly all the volumes being of that kind furnished with plates. Had he been a man gifted with a powerful intellect, of an ably thinking in place of an acutely feeling mind, he might have brought the strong support of philosophy to bear him up under the pressure of his misery—might have taught himself to disregard, even to resign, the pleasures or comforts of which it deprived him, or to seek for others haply of a far higher kind, in the telescope, in the laboratory, or among the volumes of those who



have investigated the intangible field of mind, and reduced thought itself under fixed principles and laws. But his mind was not of this order—it was one framed to *feel* with the greatest intensity, and to be in the most exquisite degree perceptive of pain or of pleasure, and great and strange pain had been heaped upon it, crushing it to the earth.

A favourite pursuit of his, it could not be called amusement, was walking alone, or in company with Mr. Hermann, or, afterwards, of myself. His residence afforded great facilities for this, being exceedingly retired, and having a number of sequestered walks hard by.

About a quarter of a mile from our little town, a quiet, lonely-looking lane, half a mile in length, branched off from the London road, leading to an ancient gateway of the manor-house. This gateway was very rarely used, a more imposing approach to the mansion having been formed nearer the town; but at the lodge resided a cottager, who had a small wicket for himself, through which any respectable-looking person had ingress to walk in the extensive parks. About half way up the lane that led to it, which was bordered by trees, in many places completely overarching it,

stood a long low cottage, itself embowered in a separate grove. Nothing could be more secluded; and the apparent gloom was increased by the high walls, covered with spikes or broken glass, that surrounded it, by a large black watch-dog that barked hoarsely and rattled his chain in front, and by the iron stanchions that guarded every loophole. A large garden was enclosed, which was nearly all devoted to the rearing of fruits and scented flowers. The house was in three divisions, completely separate; one, and the largest, was inhabited by Mr. Jaques, and in it were a couple of rooms into which no foot save his own ever entered—from these last strange odours often issued, as of burning. The second division was inhabited by Mr. Hermann and the girl Rachel, who passed as his daughter; and here were accumulated all luxuries of oriental or western production. The third was allotted to the servants, containing the kitchen, &c.

Mr. Hermann was a foreigner, spoke broken English, and was evidently upwards of seventy years of age. It was through him all business was transacted—all purchases made; and he appeared also to act as a sort of teacher or mentor both to Mr. Jaques and

Rachel, having a sort of habitual authority which both tacitly obeyed. He had very much the aspect of a foreign Jew, and spoke German well—still, however, with the appearance of its not being his mother tongue. He had evidently travelled a great deal, though he was taciturn, and indisposed to talk of his past life.

The girl who called herself Rachel also appeared not to be a native of this country, and spoke the language with a sweetly slight foreign accent, though she knew no other save by book acquirement, with the exception of a few words, hard in their sound and full of consonants, which she had for day, night, father, mother, ground, water, and the like objects, and which she said hovered about her mind as if she had heard them in a dream. She was a beautiful creature, such as you would likely see once or twice in a stirring lifetime. She was faultless in beauty of form and face, as if Heaven had intended her for a model, to be set up against men's ideals, to prove that nature was still the proper standard of the beautiful. She seemed the child of a race whose natural perfection has never been deteriorated by any of the many causes that tend to misshape the frame—of a race whose

limbs have been deformed by no slavish labour—whose skin has never been discoloured by unwholesome food, cosmetics, or day slumber and nocturnal activity—whose blood is uncontaminated with the virus of royal and aristocratic diseases—who for ages, free, healthy, unrefined, have preserved the pristine and natural beauty and symmetry of animal man.

She had no trace of Hebrew origin in her countenance, nor did it, indeed, seem to bespeak her of any race or kindred; she appeared to be of the perfect race from which all others have branched, taking from circumstances their distinguishing peculiarities. Yet she was not a mere beauty—she was a warm-hearted, gentle-tempered thing, of a disposition to cling for protection and repay it with endearment. She had talents, too, and taste, natural and therefore true—was apt at imitation, and could speedily manufacture for herself anything light or graceful. Modest she was—humble, innocent, and unsuspecting; anxious to please, and prone to fall in love, unguardedly and wholly.

A strange family did they seem, those three, so incongruous in their characters and habits, yet all so sequestered from society!



I had become a frequent inmate of the cottage, and my company was eagerly welcomed by all within it. I had completely acquired the confidence of Mr. Jaques, affording him what he had long pined for—a friend. I had much conversation with him, for he often sought information as to what was passing and had passed in the world, from which he was otherwise completely shut out. By and by I began to walk with him, though, from his excessive avoidance of danger, I was often put to annoyance—an annoyance, however, which I was careful to conceal. Thus, once at a sharp turn we met a gang of gipsies advancing toward us: immediately he stopped, staggered toward the hedge, and stood still, pale and trembling, for they were too close upon him to allow of his retreat. One of the men, as they passed, seeing his trepidation, and desiring to make a bit of fun out of it for his comrades, rushed up near him, leaped into the air, flourished his stick, and brought it down with a loud blow on a box of tinkering tools, at the same time shouting a great oath. Poor Jaques fell against the hedge with his eyes closed and the muscles of his face twitching as if he were in a fit, while the colour left not only his cheeks but his lips, which quivered now

and again. The gipsy, laughing loudly, went on his way, talking with contempt of the scented lady-face. I flew to the side of Jaques and took his arm—he started up, looking wildly around, as if he would have taken to his heels.

“Nonsense !” said I, “what alarms you?”

“What !” replied he ; “a fate worse to me than death could be to you—worse to me and the people from whom I spring, and therefore more dreaded. I am a horrible stigma on my race—I fear not so much for myself.”

“I thought you had fainted away.”

“No,” said he, “*I dare not faint*. I am cursed ; and, vast as my curse is, as long as it is known but to myself, it is shorn of half its terrors. If I faint I am lost for ever. Death itself offers no refuge for me. I must still live on, and suffer still—a shame, an outcast, a blot on human kind.”

“But, my dear Jaques, this absurd fear, which makes us both so ridiculous—”

“Fear—fear ! God of my kindred, how gladly would I submit to torture, to death in its most dreadful form, were I to be freed by it from this dread burden ! How readily would I this moment shatter this poor

body like a vessel of clay, were it not for what would come after !”

“Compose yourself, my dear sir. You shall have my arm down to the cottage. I never saw a man in such excitement—how you shake !”

“Is it not a woful fate, my good E——? Not only does this misery grind me down both spirit and body, but entails upon me every evil imputation—cowardice, horrible sins, remorse for great crimes, madness, and from the lower orders unhallowed practices with devils. Bear with me, dear E——; if you know me innocent of the others, do not consider me a slave to fear. I have but two fears—one, of the great curse under which I suffer; the other, of the Being that saw fit to lay it upon me.”

“But what has that to do with such nonsense as the gipsy’s antics ?”

“He might be tempted to strike, or he might do it accidentally; and the blow that might be a trifle to another man might be my utter ruin. Alas! you cannot understand it. I hold what is dearer than life but by the strength of a single hair—I cannot even die without the exposure of the everlasting shame of myself and my people; and yet death is ever drawing

nearer and nearer, and, however guarded, it must ultimately be revealed ; but then I shall not be alive to know the horror, the shame, the astonishment."

Another time, in conversation, he asked me if I knew of any death which withdrew the body utterly from the earth, so that no atom of it might ever meet the sight of any intelligent creature.

I told him that to have the body sunk in the ocean, with weights attached, was the only way I could think of at the time.

"Yes," said he ; "but, in the progress of decay, the weights might get separated, and the dead body would rise, a blasting testimony to the eyes of frightened mariners."

I directed my mind to the thought for a little, and then related to him the following circumstance :—

"I was once visiting an extensive iron-smelting work, which had been more than a century in active operation. I may mention to you that all the materials used are poured into the furnaces—which are high circular towers of large dimensions—from the top ; there being no other apertures into them, save the two holes where the air is blown in, one to draw off the liquid iron, and one, at a higher level, to draw off the



slag or refuse, which floats above it, being lighter. The materials then, coal, iron-ore, and limestone, are hoisted to the top of these furnace-towers, and, by men stationed there, precipitated from the trucks into their blazing interiors. Now one of these towers was shown me, into which a man fell, along with truck, materials, and all. It was nonsense to think of doing anything, as he must have been *fused* immediately, for the melting heat of cast iron is equivalent to upwards of 6000° of Fahrenheit's scale, and the temperature in these furnaces is always much higher ; so all that could be done was but to send another man to the top to continue the work, with advice to take care of himself."

"And did no vestige of the man remain?" cried he.

"Not two atoms of him continued in vital or chemical combination. The metal buttons of his clothes must have become like water in an instant, and mingled with the liquid iron ; the lime of his bones must have gone into the slag, and his flesh passed among the carbon."

"That is the death for me !" cried he, with eager enthusiasm, while I staggered back, at once in horror at such a sentiment, and wonder to hear it uttered so

earnestly by one who would quail at the wind among the trees lest a bough should fall upon him.

“That,” he continued, “or a volcano ; and I would seek it to-morrow, were it not for the danger to be incurred in seeking it.”

And yet this man was really perfectly sane ; at least there was nothing the matter with his faculty of judgment. The foregoing may give an idea of the gloomy nature of his conversation, according so well with the despairing expression of his face. Again, he would speak to me in this way :—

“Could you imagine a curse upon the soul and upon the body, from almost birth, of a creature who has done nothing to deserve it—a curse which of itself effectually prevents all sin in its victim, save that of blasphemy—which at once stands a monstrous barrier between him and his species, and hangs upon him like a putrifying carcase bound to him wherever he goes—which as a flaming sword waves between him and all the pleasures man usually covets—power, wealth, society, wine, and, oh my heart ! above all, *love*—deprives him of every good, and, at the same time, contains concentrated in itself every evil, for which there is no remedy, no hope, no alleviation—of which

death, the refuge from all other evils, will only increase the horror tenfold? That curse is mine : it was fixed upon me while a child, ere yet I could merit it by any sin; but a mysterious tenet of my ancient people holds that among them the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children an hundred fold—yes, an hundred fold.”

“ It must be indeed a strange and mysterious thing—a dreadful thing—that makes you so different from other men. Why do you appear so fixed against my knowing of it?—I might be able to suggest a cure or an alleviation.”

“ A cure !—an alleviation !—oh, Father !” here he stood still and threw up his hands to heaven, while the most agonizing expression of pain and despair filled his features.

“ At least,” said I, sorry that I had so excited him, “ the consolations of a friend are welcome under all inflictions, and you know when I speak thus it is with the best and sincerest intentions.”

“ I know it, dear E——, I know it: if you have any kindness for me, give your unquestioning friendship; it is a solace I with all my soul desire, though Heaven knows I can never repay it save with the

regard of a poor, helpless, hopeless, despicable being, the blasted and accursed object of Heaven's mysterious wrath. Seek to know nothing of me, but take me as you find me, with my misery, my groans, and my despair. If you seek more I shall begin to fear you with greater terror than you would fear the grave. Leave me alone to my wretchedness: I must have been created for it, and no other being can partake it with me."

On another occasion, I remember well, he was speaking to me as we sat together in the cottage. Rachel, who was now getting a superb girl, between fifteen and sixteen, but tall and beautifully developed for her age, had just left the room for half an hour's absence upon some of her own avocations.

"Oh!" said he, with bitterness, "if there is one portion of my great misery that tries me more in thought than another, it is this—that love—love, that passion which is the cause, remote or proximate, of all the joys of life to other men, must be to me for ever a fountain sealed—I can never know what it is to be addressed 'beloved,' or called by the dear name of 'father!' No: I may love, but who shall love me again?—I may love, but I must nourish the hopeless



feeling in my own bosom, and add it to the heap of woes that is there!—I may love, but, if my passion's object knew what I really am, she would die of horror and disgust! Look at that bright being! I love her—oh, how fondly and how sadly! She is, like me, an outcast, and was sent to me to be a solace to me: but little do they know that sent her the heart that beats here! I love her, and I believe she loves me too, though she is all cheerfulness and joy, I all misery and gloom. Alas! alas! this dear Rachel, that has been my companion—my pet—even as my own child—from her infancy—did she but know what a being lives under the roof-tree with her!” Here he bent forward upon the table, and remained silent for a long time.

I used to love much to talk with him about his own religion and people. I found the feeling with which he regarded Christians had nothing of enmity or any bad sentiment in it, though he often alluded to the wrongs his nation had received from us, who owed them so much, and who, moreover, should in honour have treated them, as strangers, at least with kindness, on the principles of hospitality. He merely considered us as good men, but in the wrong, and had an idea that his nation had peculiar claims upon the

Almighty beyond all others—that they were the *king nation*, as he said—believing them as far exalted above all other races as princes are above plebeians, having also a birthright over all others. He used to delight to dwell upon the old records of Jewish glory—their struggles, their wars, their defections, punishments, religion, and laws.

“I myself,” he once said, with much bitterness of tone, “am a living monument of their old transgressions, plagues, and punishments.”

“The wandering Jew!” cried I, in amazement; and I confess that, considering in a moment the strange manners and disposition, and mysterious grief and despair of the being before me, I was ready, in spite of reason, to believe the whole absurd fable, and another word would have made me salute him by the name given in the monkish legends. He looked at me calmly.

“How could you think of such an absurd thing?” said he. “Alas! with that being—if there were such—great as his misery is fabled to be, I would willingly exchange fates. But you cannot understand what I mean,” continued he, “and I was wrong to make such an allusion.”

“ But, Jaques,” said I, anxious to change the conversation, “ what do you believe will be the ultimate fate of your people, in connexion with other nations ?”

“ I believe that in the fulness of time all people will see the falsity of their various faiths, and the truth of that preserved and suffered for through all ages by the Jews—that the latter will then take a pre-eminence, not so much political as moral, over all the world.”

But it was not at all times he spoke with such faith of the tenets of his religion. I remember once he said to me,—

“ What if all the old history of the Jews is a biassed account ? I am almost convinced of it to-day—that is, that it was a one-sided narrative, written for a proud, poor, and obscure race, to flatter them, and give them a sort of heroic devotion to their own independence and peculiar customs. I have been reading much upon the subject. It would appear, from the accounts of profane historians of the time, that the Jews in Egypt were a half-savage race, placed among a highly polished and powerful nation—not much differing from the gipsies among the English at the present period ;—that, whilst the Egyptians were weav-

ing linen, riding in carriages, practising scientific agriculture, effecting vast useful and ornamental public works, intimate with mathematics and astronomy, and governed by admirable laws, the Jews were a degraded race, propagating abundantly, and, where not employed in slave-labour, leading a nomadic life, with sheep and cattle, in those parts of the country which were not of value enough to be put under cultivation by the enlightened and industrious denizens;—that they were an ignorant, uncleanly race, among whom contagious diseases always abounded, often spreading from them, and sweeping away multitudes of the real people of the country;—that at length, finding them becoming numerous and insolent in their state of barbarity and disease, the Egyptians rose upon them and thrust them out of the land;—that one Moses, an ambitious priest of Osiris, thinking this a good opportunity of placing himself at the head of a nation, went out after them to the desert, and offered himself as their leader;—that, becoming so, he proceeded to vast measures of civilization, with a view of as speedily as possible elevating their moral and physical character, and making them an enterprising and formidable people;—that of these measures were the institution



of a religion and laws, both according to models taught in the Egyptian schools; the palming upon them of a fictitious history of their ancestry; the injunction of habits of the strictest personal cleanliness, and separation of the diseased—measures which nothing but the belief of an actual divine command could have induced an ignorant and superstitious horde to adopt at once.

“Don’t you think that there is, in the books of Moses themselves, evidence of something like the truth of this? Look at the stringency of the regulations with respect to cleanliness—the prohibition from touching foul animals or putrid meat, or anything that might be supposed to give origin to pestilence—the complete separation of those suffering from that dreadful disease the leprosy of ancient times, a separation half as perfect as which no modern quarantine could ever effect, unaided as it must be by superstitious fear. I read all this in a book this morning, and the idea struck me immediately. Don’t you think it is possible?” He spoke with an expression of much anxiety.

“I might have thought so a few years ago,” said I, “when I was young and inexperienced, but now I

know to how much credence these books are entitled. Alas, Jaques ! you recollect when we first inclined to each other, it was the perception of great misery in each other's outward appearance that gradually drew us together with the sympathy of wretchedness. The misery I suffered then was the result of books similar to that. Thrust the pestilential thing into the fire—there is poison in its pages, both for body and soul.”

“ And you think there is no faith to be put in this book ?”

“ None. It is the dream of a fool, written with a purpose which is to support a visionary theory, at the expense of truth and the soul's health of all who read it.”

“ But how strange ! The leprosy, you know, would seem to have been a disease always inherent among the Jews of old ; or rather, endemic, I think you would call it.”

“ Trust me,” said I, “ the book is naught ; there is no faith to be put in it or the pretended ancient authorities it appears to quote from.”

As my familiarity at the house went on, I found myself daily more and more welcome, not only to Jaques but to Mr. Hermann, who seemed to have

some communication of importance to make to me, but always to procrastinate its delivery; but chiefly to Rachel, who appeared to feel a perfect happiness in my society.

“How is it,” said she to me once, “that you laugh and jest, and are always smiling and in good spirits, just like me? I thought that all men were gloomy and sorrowful, like Mr. Hermann and Mr. Jaques. Poor Mr. Jaques! how beautiful a creature he is! but then he is always so unhappy! What a pity he is not like us! I could love him so; for, besides his beautiful face, he is kind, very kind to me—never says anything harsh, like Mr. Hermann, nor even reproves my glee, save with his own silent sadness.”

“And do you not love him as he is, Rachel?”

“Oh, I love him very much, but he is always so repulsive, as if he feared me—as if he had something in his thoughts he dreaded I might discover; and, though he is very kind to me, yet gloomy, despondent kindness is cold, cold.”

By and by I began to dread that some irresistible passion for this beautiful outcast was about to usurp all my mind, and that my happiness was going to be centred in a creature of whom I knew nothing save

that she was very beautiful, and in all things simple as a child. I knew she loved me with her whole heart, and with more than the common devotion of women—for she had no choice of lovers : her feeling for Jaques, much as he loved her, was more of compassion than love, mingled probably with admiration of his good looks, and gratitude for his kindness and attention. But for me alone I was convinced she felt the passion of love : I knew it by ten thousand tokens, in actions, expressions, eye, and gesture ; and, more, I saw that she knew of my knowing it, and felt a fluttering pleasure thereat.

Still I continued as familiar about that cottage almost as a member of the household, nor was it long before what I had dreaded came to pass. I was bound to it as by an irresistible spell, and my whole thoughts, which should have been directed to doing all things in furtherance of my professional connexion, and to fostering into strength my infant practice, were devoted with absorbing anxiety to this fair young creature. I may state that any open connexion with the inhabitants of that cottage was decidedly inimical to that immaculate respectability which is necessary to the rise of a young medical man ; for they were retired



persons, of strange and foreign aspect, apparently following no lawful avocations, nor attending the worship of the church nor of any form of dissent; and in a small community, where every one knows and discusses his neighbour's affairs as much as his own, the familiarity of one person alone among such people directed attention to him generally and unfavourably. I found this to be the case with me—that I became an object of almost as much remark and suspicion as my strange friends. My practice, limited as it was, fell off daily, and at last my occupation was gone. Moreover, my friends in the town became chary of admitting me to their society, or being seen with me in public. All this was, I am certain, in a great measure owing to my complete silence to all questions—and they were numerous—put to me with regard to my mysterious associates.

But while I had this heavy care weighing upon my mind, I began to be aware of the bitter jealousy of Mr. Jaques; and, whilst I felt that I had not played an altogether honourable part in allowing the affections of the girl to become fixed on me, I yet felt it would have been impossible for me to have avoided it by any other steps. Moreover, though I was ignorant

of her origin, or the relation in which she stood to either Hermann or Jaques, I yet felt that, though both should appear the most mean and dishonourable, even infamous, so deeply and strongly had she, good or bad, fixed herself on my affections, that infamy and public contempt with her would be to me not equivalent to the bliss of her love.

Jaques' jealousy grew even more and more rankling, and his anger more vehement, and both, acting on his despair for himself, produced paroxysms of passion at once most violent in themselves and heart-rending to be witnessed. At one time he would assail me with the blackest epithets, accuse me of worming myself into his confidence and coming into his house under the mask of false friendship, to seduce from him the only being who held him in regard; he would impute to me the most criminal intentions and conduct, say everything he thought would wound me, and, when his attack upon me was exhausted, would launch into exclamations of wild lament and blasphemous expressions, and cries of agony, that no one, however used to them, could bear to listen to. He would order me from his house, never to see him more; and, if I offered to go, would implore me to stay.

“ You must not, you shall not go !” he would scream. “ You have us in your power—you will expose us—you will betray what you have seen. Oh, fool, fool that I was, to be duped by such shallow artifices !”

Then he would revert to his own misery and despair, and rave wildly and incoherently, with frantic gestures and writhing features, till he became utterly exhausted in strength, and remained trembling, pale as death, unable to speak above a whisper, or weeping silently and copiously. Shortly afterwards he would address me, beseeching pardon.

“ Oh, forgive me, E——,” he would say ; “ I am a poor slave of passion—I never doubted your truth and honour. You have ruined your prospects through your friendship for me, I know. And what am I ? In one way a poor, ignorant, uneducated, spiritless, afflicted creature ; in another, a being under Heaven’s dreadful ban—an outcast—a reproach to humanity—a blotch on the fair front of his species. Oh ! what return can I ever make to you ? There is Rachel—take her—make her your own. You love one another, and are happy in your love : I love her also—but what is love to me ?—misery. A hideous barrier stands for ever between us ; why then should I make it also come

between you? But one thing: when you are happy with her—and I know you will be—do not forget the poor creature to whom it is decreed that woe in this world shall alone be known.”

But Rachel and myself, observing the feelings with which he appeared to regard our intimacy, only loved each other with more fondness, and, in our conversations with one another, began to make as it were one cause together. Thus all confidences were interchanged between us, and in many sweet walks and other interviews we communicated our mutual histories.

She told me she did not know of what country she was a native—she could not recollect any land but my own; of her parentage, too, she was entirely ignorant. She had lived at the cottage ever since she was a child, and had all that time seen no one near, or to speak to, save Mr. Hermann, Mr. Jaques, and the two women-servants. She had not all that time observed any difference in either, save that the former seemed growing older and more feeble. She had been brought to the cottage by the old female, Tamar, and faintly remembered being with her for many days in a ship at sea. Her life, since then, had passed in one monotonous



course, with a portion of which I was fully acquainted. She owned, to my delighted ears, that she loved me with her whole heart, if love meant the fact that she could never be happy, or even at rest in her mind, out of my society; that she would go with me anywhere, and always be kind to me; that she would leave Mr. Jaques, Mr. Hermann, Sarah, the cottage, garden, dog, and all, with eager readiness, to be my humble and affectionate servant. Now here was a young creature, loving and ravishingly lovely, whom, by remarkable circumstances, I had altogether in my power, and might have taught to sin. Did I? I fear that, were it known, most gentlemen of spirit would consider me a contemptible fool for the course I did pursue. I endeavoured to explain to her the higher doctrines of morals—the principles of natural religion, and afterwards of revelation. She heard with eager ears, trusting me in everything; indeed, she could not but believe me, for her heart so inclined to me, that every sentence I uttered was received and loved as if it were a portion of myself. Thereafter I taught her the tenets of that branch of the great Protestant faith upon which I saw fit to rest my own prospects for futurity. I found that by this her feelings toward me

were increased to an intensity of which I had previously no conception, unacquainted as I had been hitherto with woman's love.

But, while this was going forward, Mr. Hermann, who had been gradually declining in health, sank at length so far as to be confined to his bed. I had now been between five and six years familiar about the place, during which time my aid, in the way of my profession, had frequently relieved him. But it was evident to me that the cistern was exhausted, and I perceived, on conversing on the subject, that his own opinion coincided with mine.

I now began to be aware of a remarkable anxiety in the old man. I have stated that for some time back he had appeared to labour under some communication of importance, which he could not bring himself to make to me; and this weight on his mind was now become so harassing as seriously to aggravate his complaint. I could hardly conceive a man so shaken, even with the thought of confessing a murder, as this man was. Often he would seem to have made up his resolution; but the words would appear to stick in his throat, while the agitation was certain to induce a paroxysm of his malady—a dry asthma, followed

by great and long-continued weakness. I observed him in frequent communication with Mr. Jaques, and also that the effect of these interviews was to exacerbate the misery of the latter to an extraordinary degree. His jealousy and freaks of passion had altogether gone from him, and he appeared as if Rachel had also completely left his thoughts, though both she and I were always near. He gave himself up almost entirely to solitude, and the expression of shame, and also of horror, sat continually upon his remarkable countenance, while his paroxysms of wailing and imprecation, in the privacy of his own apartments, were excessive and unremitting; so that I often, even in the lonely road by the demesne, have heard his cries. He never left the cottage, nor within was he ever at rest, but was continually starting and shifting about, wandering from room to room, like an animal to whose body some one has affixed a tormenting instrument.

At length, one day, they seemed to have come to a determination, and Mr. Hermann unbosomed himself to me. He was now very weak—so weak as to be unable to sit up or to speak louder than a thick whisper. Jaques had been for several hours closeted

with him, and now stood by his bedside, silent, deadly pale, and with his eyes strangely sparkling.

“Mr. E——,” said the old man, “I have not many hours to live, I believe ; but, before I die, there is a communication which must be made to some one, and I have at length persuaded Mr. Jaques to submit to having it made to you, for it regards him alone. Your profession, your circumstances, the long friendship you have borne for him, the excellence of your heart, your firm discretion, and your strong passion for Rachel, all unite to make you appear, as it were, a person appointed by Providence to know and guard the awful secret of his affliction. You are aware that I was always absolutely necessary to him, and somebody must ever be, for he is a creature utterly powerless and helpless : he cannot mingle with society—from that he is for ever debarred ; for he could not travel—he could not indulge in wine—he could not lose command of himself for a moment—the slightest accident could not happen to him—without a discovery being made, of which my mind cannot conceive the consequences, whether to himself, to his family and people, or to the public. But it is right I should first inform you who he is. He is the eldest son of the late



——, a foreign Jew of great wealth. For many centuries there has not been such a thing among our people as what I am about to relate to you. Its causes who can tell? But his father, when he saw it, broke his heart, declined, and died. Jaques, your friend, with whom you have been for years in daily intimacy, is a miserable——”

“Do not name the accursed word!” shrieked Jaques, with frantic gestures—and, springing away, while his whole frame shook, and his face flushed to crimson, and his eyes seemed to flame in their orbits, he rent his clothes in pieces, and stood before my bewildered eyes—A LEPER! Yes! with the exception of the head and neck, and hands and feet, his whole frame was a scaly mass of horrible leprosy—oh! most horrible! I could not look upon him, but covered my face with my hands, and staggered back, feeling sick—sick and feeble; and for a moment consciousness left me. I fainted, and fell upon the carpet. Presently the horizontal position restored me to recollection, and, sitting up, the horrible scene came back upon my mind. I felt as one awakened from sleep, and recollecting a frightful dream. I looked,—Jaques was gone; but there on the floor lay the torn and

scattered fragments of his dress, and in bed near me lay Hermann, with his head turned away towards the wall.

I do not think I was ever so wrought upon by any emotion as I was by the mingled surprise, horror, disgust, and dread, that hideous spectacle produced in me. I remained for several minutes seated on the floor, feeble in limbs as a child, and utterly at a loss to direct my thoughts fixedly to any subject. At length, observing a bottle of wine, from which I had been compounding some negus for the dying man, I snatched it, and swallowed a long draught.

Thereupon, rising, I approached the bedside to see the state of Mr. Hermann. Slowly and languidly he turned his head round upon the pillow, and heaved a deep sigh.

“ You have seen ?” said he.

“ I have,” I replied, and an involuntary shudder passed over me as I spoke.

“ You will be aware then, at once, of the cause of my poor friend’s fear, misery, and despair. You will see, from your own medical knowledge, that there is no hope of any alleviation.”

“ None, except in death !”

“ No ! it cannot be—he must still live on, and drag out his wretched existence. Suicide would expose the body to the public gaze, and drag the veil from the ancient shame of our race. He must not die ! I am convinced it is only this consideration that in some manner keeps the poor creature—more sensitive as he is than any woman—from sinking and perishing under the weight of his awful affliction ; discovery of his secret by any one would be death to him, and that most fearful death which springs from mental pangs. You will see that by this he is shut out from all communion with his fellow-men. You know your own disgust, though you have known him for years, and been his most intimate friend ; nor can I conceal mine, though I have been his attendant from birth. He knows this and feels it. Oh, how bitterly the wretch feels it ! ”

“ True,” said I, “ he was right—all pleasures must be for ever unknown to him. He must be for ever a solitary. Oh, what an accumulation of miseries crush he poor hopeless being ! none of those enjoyments that make life bearable to other men can, by possibility ever be his ! he must live aye in the gnawing feeling of ungratifiable affections—and no hope

—no hope ! He must be perpetually a burden—a disgust—a nuisance to himself and all who know his horrible secret — a modern Philoctetes, with poisoned wounds.\* And, too, there is no way by which he may deliver his spirit from this bondage—every avenue of escape from his curse is by that very curse blocked up !”

“But to let you understand why I have made this communication : I hope that when I am gone you will take your poor friend under your protection, and be to him what I have been, with this difference, that, where I

\* Philoctetes was the friend and “squire” of Hercules, and on his apotheosis inherited his arrows poisoned with the blood of the monster Hydra. At the altar of Hercules, in the city of Chrysa, he was stung by a serpent, and his wounds became so noisome, and his cries so horrible to the Greek army on the Trojan expedition, that he was, by Ulysses and Diomed, deserted on the island of Lemnos, where, in a cave, he remained, uncured, the whole ten years of the war. Troy, however, could not be taken without the arrows, and Ulysses and Neoptolemus went to Lemnos to fetch him. Hercules, appearing, despatched him with them, and sent Æsculapius from heaven to cure him. Sophocles, the most eminent of the ancient tragedians, in his play on the subject, act iv., scene 1, introduces him upon the stage, howling and writhing under the agonies of his distemper. The scene is a long one, and Philoctetes nearly fills it, but Sophocles would appear not to have been so scrupulous about the horrible as some of we moderns.



have been a faithful servant, you will be a confidential friend. He is, I may tell you, possessed of vast wealth, which he is for ever incapable of using; and this, as you have ruined your own prospects through attachment to him, he will place completely at your disposal, the only drawback upon it being his society, which, it would appear, for five years past or more you have not considered any burden. If you accept this proposal Rachel is yours. She is a Georgian girl, bought in the slave-market at Constantinople, by order of his relations, and sent here under charge of Tamar, the housekeeper. She was brought here at five years old, and intended to be reared up in the belief that all men were the same as Jaques, in order that she might become a companion and solace to him when, in the course of things, I should be removed. From different causes, among which were the exceeding shame of Jaques, his high sense of honour, and his disgust at the immoral nature of the whole proceeding, this was never attempted to be carried into effect, and she is now totally ignorant of this secret, which, although it may be a bitter heartburning to many abroad, is in England known but to you, to its unfortunate subject, and to myself. That Rachel is beautiful, innocent, and

good, you are yourself aware ; and I swear, as one swears who is laid on such a bed as mine, that she is intact and immaculate as the blue sky of heaven. Her you will marry, if the proposal be agreeable to you, and take possession of this house as the master of it. You will find under my charge nearly two thousand pounds in cash, and Mr. Jaques will procure you as much more as you like, by what will seem a sort of magic.”

“ Alas ! poor fellow ! I have already been deeply obliged by him.”

“ Him I recommend to the compassion and kindness of you both, trusting you will make his path to the grave as gentle as I am convinced it will be short. I am sure you will do this ; for if his disposition and manners were such as to win your friendship unaided, how much more will your pity and affection be attracted when you know that without your protection this friend is nought, that more than his existence depends on your kindness and discretion, and that the poor creature dotes upon you both as the only beings to whom he has ever borne regard ?”

“ I accept the proposal with joy,” cried I. “ My good Hermann, repose in peace : rely on me, that the

same as I have been hitherto will I continue to be ; all the cares, comforts, and mitigations my profession can suggest shall be applied, and my whole time and attention shall be devoted to him in soothing and palliation. I will be his constant companion and guard, and the aim of my every action shall be to lighten the burden of his misery."

" I am content," replied Hermann, " and with your assistance will send to his relations abroad a notification of the circumstances, with other suitable communications."

And thereupon we had a conversation of some time, until he seemed very much exhausted. I then sought Jaques, but he was locked in his own rooms, to which, on knocking, I found him indisposed to admit me.

Next day, however, on going to the cottage, I found him dressed carefully as usual, and waiting for me. He had the appearance of one to whom some sudden and great bereavement had taken place. He had an aspect, too, humiliated, almost grovelling ; for his shame at the revelation made to me was excessive, and he looked as if he could not stand up in my presence. He was seated by a table, with his head leaning for-

ward upon his arms, weeping much. When I spoke to him he dropped upon his knees, and began to implore forgiveness for the imposition that he had practised upon me in palming upon me as a friend, for so long a time, the vilest wretch breathing. I entreated him to calm himself, and, when I had restored him to his seat, blamed him greatly that this disclosure had not been made to me years before, when I might have put in requisition all the resources of my professional and general information to relieve or palliate his sufferings—if impossible with regard to those of the body, yet with strong hope of success as far as concerned those of the mind. I then begged him to believe that my feelings towards him were not at all changed—that I had acquired a new feeling in addition to regard—that feeling we entertain for those who are helpless of themselves, and dependent on us for protection.

By and by, as we conversed, he began to talk with freedom, lamenting and repining very much in his former style, and I soon perceived I was again acquiring his entire confidence; and shortly, grasping my hand, he poured forth to me all the gratitude of his heart, in the impassioned tones and phrases of deep



and earnest feeling, calling me his father and his brother—his more than either.

“For they,” cried he, “banished me here from them, leaving me to live or die among strangers; but you, all polluted as I am, have made me your friend and taken me to your heart—you are indeed a ‘good Samaritan.’”

And here he heaped many blessings upon me, and all of my blood or house. But I soon led him to talk on affairs more of a business nature, and began, with him, to consider our future arrangements. Thereupon we withdrew to the chamber of Mr. Hermann, and before long had them satisfactorily completed: and that very day I proceeded to act upon them, as, from the illness of Mr. Hermann, I found there was a great deal of arrears to bring up.

The old man expired on the fourth day after the communication with regard to Jaques. He died in peace, apparently without a trouble on his mind, save the parting from his attached and grateful friend rather than master, who, on his own side, seemed to feel the bereavement acutely. Rachel, too, mourned his loss with bitter and heartfelt sorrow, mingled with a powerful feeling of dread; for heretofore she had

never known more of what death was than hearing the word spoken, or meeting it held up as a terror in her reading. For many days after, on coming suddenly upon her, I would find her weeping, and her general spirits received a shock from which it was long ere they recovered.

Under my directions the body was interred in a vault under one of the churches of our little town, which I purchased at a great expense, intending it, as it was safe from all violation, for the final rest of his master.

I now took up my residence at the cottage, and at once, almost to my surprise, found myself master of unlimited funds. With these I began to secure every comfort I could devise for my patient and friend, and to accumulate a library of books on scientific subjects, and others, after my own heart. All luxuries of the table I likewise provided, and all of the cellar, and, indeed, devoted my whole time to his interests and our mutual comfort.

I had not been long at the cottage till, having agreed with Rachel on the matter, I consulted Jaques with regard to her baptism. He made no objections. "For surely," said he, "your religion cannot be a bad one, if it be according to its principles you have

acted in your connexion with me. It is well that she should be a Christian—for me, I must cling to the tenets of my people.”

But when, some days after, I spoke to him of our marriage, I found a very different result. He consented readily, and wished me with her all joy, but fell immediately after into a dark mood I thought ominous of no good.

Nevertheless we were wedded—as privately as possible, with no more witnesses than the law required. On the day of the marriage I observed about Jaques enough to convince me that he had some intentions of the darkest description, which I could not rest without thoroughly investigating, the more as he bade us both farewell when he left us, bursting into tears as he did so, and wringing my hand with a warmth and an expression of grasp, if I can be permitted such a phrase, that all but drew from me the same tokens of affection: for I reflected that I was taking to myself for ever the girl he doted on, with no excuse save that I felt for her as strong an affection, and that he, from no demerit of his own, was unfit to possess her, while my claim, on the contrary, arose from no merit of mine.

So strongly did a fear of some catastrophe oppress me, that I could not help, ere I myself retired, entering his apartments.

I found him laid on his bed, apparently in a deep sleep, a strong-smelling, stifling smoke pervading the room, which appeared to issue from beneath it. Panic-struck I snatched his arm, and endeavoured to rouse him, but he continued to slumber on, as if under the influence of some soporific drug. I shook him and shouted in his ear, but he only answered in indistinct murmurings. For a moment my mind failed me—I was unable to resolve on any course of conduct; but this indecision was of short duration. Examining beneath his bed, I discovered an immense pile of wood—a regular funeral pile—partially on fire.

His object now rushed forcibly upon my thoughts, and the conversation I have detailed in the earlier part of this narrative at the same time rose vividly before my mind. He had evidently stupified himself with opium, with a view to the incrimation of his body.

Immediately I caught him in my arms, carried him to another apartment, and then, returning, seized, as rapidly as I could, the burning billets, and, scorching my hands and arms very much as I did it, thrust



them, one by one, out of the window, through the iron stanchions, into the flower-plot before the cottage.

I had enclosed a large field behind the garden, intending it to be a sort of exercise-ground. It was fenced, temporarily, with wooden stakes daubed with tar, until a wall could be built, and these he had carried into the house, during my absence, to such a quantity, as must, if discovered on fire a few minutes later, have involved us all in one conflagration.

As soon as I had sufficiently cleared the room of these stakes, I hastened to where I had left him, with my hands so scorched, that on anything I touched they left the cuticle behind; nevertheless, I immediately proceeded to administer the strongest and most certain emetic I knew of, namely, sulphate of zinc, or white vitriol, at the same time raising him up, and endeavouring to make him use his limbs.

Shortly the medicine acted, and I became aware of his having swallowed an enormous quantity of some preparation of opium—I found afterwards that it was the mild or camphorated tincture he had taken, in place of the common tincture, better known by the name of laudanum, having been misled by the Latin labels on my bottles. Notwithstanding this, so great

had been the quantity swallowed, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could keep him stirring till the morning. Yes, all night long, I dragged him up and down the apartment, allowing not to his most urgent entreaties a moment's rest, for I knew that to him sleep was death. All the night was I thus employed, and while I was so, my burnt hands and arms caused me the most acute anguish. At last, towards morning, the pain subsided, and, wearied out, I dropped asleep myself. He slept also, but the power of the poison had been overcome, and his sleep was like mine, more from exhaustion.

When I awoke I found him still asleep, but fevered from reaction. I left him to come back to consciousness by himself, and went to attend to my own burns, and thus was passed the day and night.

When I next saw Jaques, nothing could exceed his shame and contrition, or his fervently-expressed gratitude and admiration of myself. A hundred extravagant ways, in the ebullition of his heart, with tears, protestations, and vows, did he take to convey to me his sense of these feelings, and his appreciation as much of the good I had done in saving him from a great crime and a dreadful death, as of my discretion

in allowing the whole to be known only to myself. Though fiercely indignant at his unhallowed attempt on not only his own life, but those of Rachel and myself, yet, at such a season, I did not blame him, or make any display of anger—I remained calm and serious, leaving him to his own reflections until I had completely cured him of the effects of the opium, when, by expressing my resolution to remove from him for good, and persisting in it, I brought him to such a state of abject humiliation and entreaty, to an exhibition of helplessness so extreme, and a dread of being deserted so overmastering, that I found the effects upon his constitution more difficult to remove than those of the opium. By this means I got him as completely under my power, as a maniac should be under that of his keeper.

It was useless at any subsequent time to inquire with regard to the motives that induced this attempt, for the very allusion to it afterwards used to put him into such a state of excited emotion, so to overwhelm him with sorrow and penitence, that he could not do more than express himself by tears and interjections, and seemed to suffer so much from the recollection, that I could not bear to call it up. But I, from my know-

ledge of his character, easily perceived that it was jealousy and despair that prompted the act, and I could fully sympathise with him and forgive him, as far as forgiveness from me went to soothe him. This affair was known only to ourselves—to Rachel I made some excuse, which, as it was untrue, I do not choose to remember.

After this, I continued to devote myself altogether to the comfort of my friend and patient, and the solacement of his sufferings. I at length succeeded in breaking him of a great part of his unreasonable timidity, and induced him to meet at the cottage several medical and other acquaintances of mine, men of education and discretion, among whom he might enjoy a chastened conviviality, introducing him to them as a resident patient. To this society he became devotedly attached. I also directed his mind to poetry, inducing him to attempt versification, a pursuit or amusement for which his exquisitely-emotional turn of mind admirably fitted him, and I do believe he had a glimpse of pleasure when I showed him one of his pieces, a sweet, wailing little ode, printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. It was surely the smile of an author's joy that lighted his features, and not the usual



sad smile of ardent affection, with which he received any kindness from Rachel or myself.

As soon as he conquered his jealousy—which he speedily did when he found that she, though my wife, continued to love him as much as ever—his attachment to us both increased, almost daily, and he returned to that sweet, gentle melancholy of temper and manner which had so charmed me with him as a friend, before his jealousy had ever been awakened. I also began, from time to time, to introduce him to a little general society, taking care to apologize previously in private for anything odd in his manner, on the ground that he was in ill health. I shall not be blamed for this when I explain that “LEPRA,” in modern days, is not infectious, nor did I scruple to allow my children to play freely with him about the rooms, or in the field behind the house. I began shortly to be persuaded that by these measures he was rendered perceptible of a degree of true happiness; for, though his paroxysms were still violent and easily excited, yet there were long intervals of quiet pensiveness between, in which the interest of his mind was absorbed in poetry and painting. For I painted a little myself, and he, seeing me mixing colour, &c., began to try the pencil, and a pleasant

rivalry commenced between us, in which Rachel was the acutely-discriminating and impartial judge of merit. Alas ! many of these pictures now hang around me, when he who painted, and she, the dear one, who awarded the meed of smiling praise, are in their graves ! The subjects he chose were singular : one, for instance, was a picture of dreariness. It was an extended view of a lake, or broad river, running across the canvas, with a sombre wood beyond, and gray, cold-looking hills in the distance—while a bare common formed the foreground. In every part of the painting—the colour and appearance of the sky, the gloomy aspect of the wood, the bare, bleak foreground and lead-coloured water, whose bent sedges and dock-leaves, and rippled surface, betokened a March wind—in every line of it was indicated dreariness, or rather hopelessness, to the mind, in a manner I never could analyse, though I felt it strongly.

Yes, surely that hitherto joyless being began to feel resignation, and, in loving and being loved by us, the pleasure of one who is not altogether alone on the earth ; nor was he now ignorant of the delights of home so dear to others. Oh, how often in these dreary days, when the beauty of a Mediterranean climate is

unable to give my spirits elasticity, or its warmth to make the blood more than drag its way through my weary heart, does my mind wander back to those evenings at the cottage with my only friend and my only beloved—to the snug parlour, the pleasant fire, cheerful candle-light, chess-board, and piled-up books—to the open piano and the flute laid along its keys, and to the big family Bible on the side-table, awaiting its time to come into requisition. Nor is it slothful to recall the glass of negus, the cigar, or the new number of the new review—the little supper of the best delicacies wealth could secure, the tinkling laugh of Rachel, or the touching tones of poor Jaques's voice, whose very sounds spoke sadness. Yes, he was happy; though his delight was not as that of other men, yet he had an ideal happiness of his own in the affection of us, his friends; in the gambols of our children, in heaping upon us every benefit his wealth could accomplish—in fondly loving us, and knowing that he had constantly in his neighbourhood a true, attached, and confidential friend, physician, and guard.

But although, for these latter years, along with the habitual agony of mind one so visited as he was could not help feeling, he experienced intervals of the most refined and exquisite happiness (I know it from his

own assurance), yet was his mind still so preyed upon, and so shaken had it formerly been—so decayed, too, was the poor disorganized machine it animated—that I perceived him, week by week, and day by day, slowly but surely declining to the natural rest from all his sufferings.

When he had lived under my charge as nearly as possible about seven years, he declined so far as to be unable to leave his bedroom. It is impossible to express on paper the depth of feeling with which he now spoke to me, as I sat continually ministering by his bedside, or the acuteness of sorrow with which I saw the flame as it were of his expiring candle, sinking into the socket. Our conversations were most affecting, both in the matter and the manner; for he talked of his own life of shame and sorrow, his expulsion by his brother, and the kindness and brotherly love he had met with from me and mine; and now he was about, at the call of nature, to leave me whom he loved of all things or creatures most, and from whom alone he had received good, and to leave me for ever, really for ever, for he was of the sect of the Sadducees, who believe in neither angel nor spirit, nor in the immortality of the soul. You may be sure I combated, as far as my powers went, this error, alleging his own case as an



example. "If there be no future for you," said I, "and your life has been one of the greatest and most constant anguish, and that to all appearance unmerited by you, where is divine justice?" And this sentence contains the moral of my narrative.

Nevertheless, he was deaf to all my arguments, his constant reply being, "I must abide by the ancient faith of my people." It was harrowing to me to hear one who had been so awfully afflicted leaving life in such a creed; but infinitely more cutting was it to listen to the clinging words of affection for its darling objects, while it was being dragged away as it were heartstring by heartstring, and believed that they, the dear ones, were being lost for ever.

Whilst on his death-bed he had frequent interviews with Rachel—indeed, as often as I could so arrange matters as to make it convenient—for she never in her life knew or suspected his secret, and I was the only being that nursed him or ministered to him in any way. With the pathos of these interviews, and the hopeless language of the sufferer, despairing, even in those circumstances in which hope is most needed, she was deeply stricken, and its effect upon her was evident after many days.

Thus declining, at length he died, and his spirit, as it took flight, left the words “dear friend” on his lips.

His body I tended for the grave with my own hands, and he was buried in the vault I had purchased on the death of Mr. Hermann. A large slab of stone, without name or date, covered him, and for epitaph I made the following line, which was graved upon it:—

“HIC DORMIT TANDEM, CUI MORS FUIT UNA VOLUPTAS.”

Meaning, “Here one sleeps, at last, whose single pleasure was death.”

I may state that the property I inherited from him by bequeathal formed, and now forms, for me, an ample independence.

Since then I have never seen a person repining, or felt myself inclined to repine, under the light trials of ordinary life, but I think of that poor young man, guilty of no crime, yet denied all pleasures, and cursed with an inconceivable misery, nor cheered under it by even a ray of hope for the future.

THE END.

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